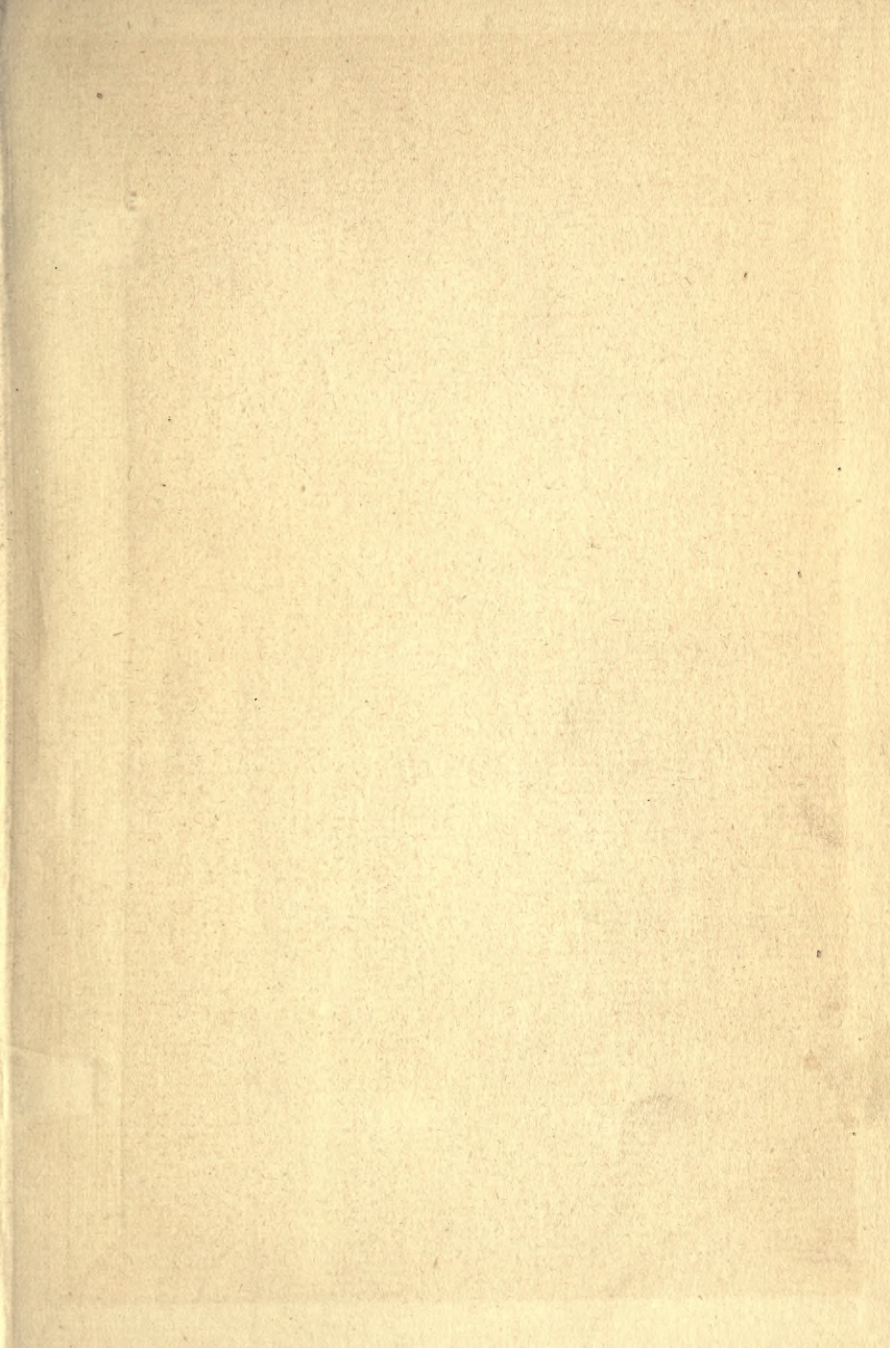


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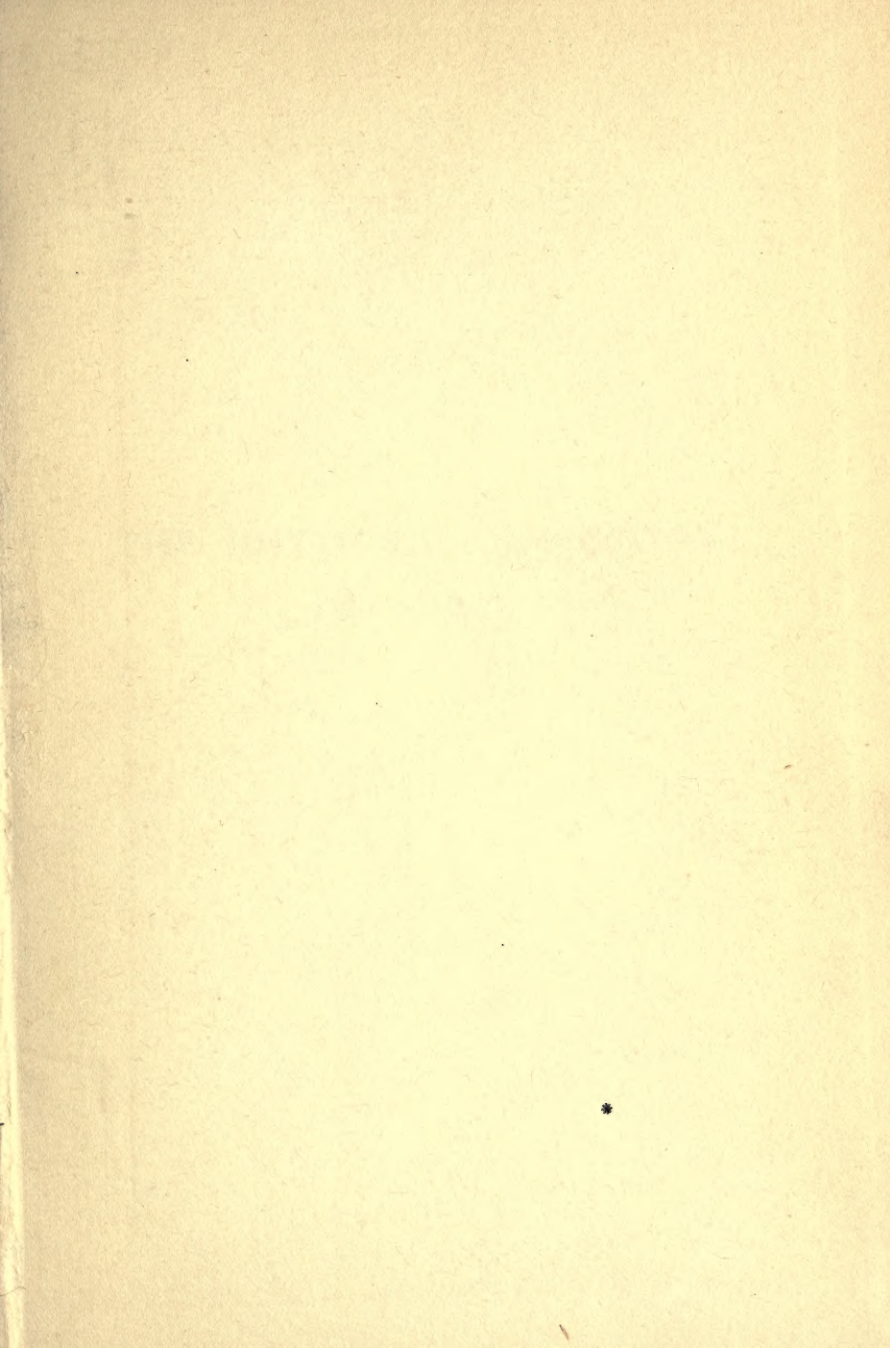


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THE RHYTHMIC CONCEPTION  
OF MUSIC

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# THE RHYTHMIC CONCEPTION OF MUSIC

BY

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*"Im Anfang war der Rhythmus."*

HANS VON BÜLOW.

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## *RHYTHM*

*Now dies the day down to the still night,  
And fadeth out of sight  
As into air.*

*Is it the sun that wanes ?  
Nay, for the earth regains  
Day, elsewhere.*

*And dieth life down to the long night,  
And stealeth out of sight  
As into air.*

*Deem you the Soul can wane ?  
Shall it not yield again  
Life, elsewhere ?*



DEDICATED  
GRATEFULLY TO  
*T. H. YORKE TROTTER*



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# The Rhythmic Conception of Music

## CHAPTER I

### RHYTHMIC UNITY

THE formative principle of art brings definiteness out of the indefinite. This is effected by division of space and division of time. Space becomes intelligible to us by its division and time can equally be grasped only by its divisions.

The form is perceived through the senses. Division of space is the formative principle in the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, and is perceived through the eye. Division of time is the formative principle in the

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art of music and is perceived through the ear. In the case of both space and time, the nature of the division is rhythmic.

Rhythm may be defined as *the periodic quality, undulating, circling, or pulsative, of all movement.*<sup>1</sup>

The arts of space-division do not in themselves exhibit movement, but being formed by a rhythmic movement in consciousness, their manifestation in space is of a rhythmic nature. In the arts of time-division the actual rhythmic movement is evident to the senses.

Rhythm introduces a common character into all things, and therefore makes for unity.

The formative principle may thus be styled the principle of Rhythmic Unity, which underlies and is common to all the

<sup>1</sup> "Rhythm is a necessary characteristic of all motion" (Spencer, "First Principles," chap. x.).

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arts. Each art has a rhythmic origin, and conforms to the rhythmic principle by consisting of a whole made up of variously related parts.

The formative principle cannot in itself make an art. There must be something that *is formed*, else the form is not perceptible to the senses. In the arts of painting and sculpture the material consists of natural forms, re-created in the mind of the artist and expressed by means of colour or varied surface. In architecture the rough material is simply the building material. In music the rough material is tone.

A tone is a sound of definite duration, pitch, intensity, and quality, and can vary in these four respects. When a tone varies in duration, it is longer or shorter ; in pitch, it is higher or lower ; in intensity, it is louder or softer ; its quality is that

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which distinguishes one kind of voice or instrument from another. As it is impossible for a tone to vary in any but one of these four ways, it is clear that Duration, Pitch, Intensity, and Quality are the factors of musical effect, and that every detail of a musical work must be referable to one of these heads.

In attempting a classification of this nature, one is met at once by the difficulty that no accurate definition is possible within the present limits of musical nomenclature. The necessary words do not exist. The terms duration, pitch, intensity, and quality can apply only to single notes or detached chords, and these, however attractive in themselves, are not music. There is no music without successive tones, nor will any succession of tones be music, other than a rhythmic succession. It is the rhythmic

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movement, the formative principle, that, leading to tone-relations, makes tone become music. In the first place a word is needed that will bring the true nature of this general development into clear relief, since an unnamed idea dwells in the region of shadows. The word "rhythmitonal" suggests itself as an appropriate one for this purpose, and it may also assist in defining the nature of the musical imagination. In the second place terms are required to express the four main branches of rhythmitonal development.

Turning to the words in present use, we find that the two words "rhythm" and "time" have to cover the whole of Duration and that every one defines them variously as seems to him best. The variation of Pitch, on the other hand, has received an undue share of attention,

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being called melody, harmony, counterpoint, polyphony, thorough-bass, part-writing, and so forth, but there is still lacking here the one word necessary to express the sum of all these, the broad classification that will distinguish Pitch from the other tone-variations and not merely a division in pitch itself. Quality has of late years been called orchestration, but, as the name implies, it relates only to the orchestra, and outside the orchestra Quality does not exist technically, while Intensity remains altogether in the limbo of the nameless. What is wanted is a term that will suggest form, a rhythmic movement, in each variation. The word "outline" has something of this significance, and is easily used in combination as follows: "time-outline," "pitch-outline," "force-outline," and "colour-outline." These terms will, in

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this work, indicate the rhythmic movements of duration, pitch, intensity, and quality.

The form of duration is the only one that exhibits the pulsative quality of rhythmic movement. This, the most evident and hence most forcible form of rhythm in music, is the only form that has hitherto been recognised by musicians, and therefore the musical term "rhythm," though ill-defined, is practically identical with "time-outline," the word being so used in the quotations which follow later.

As a consequence of this narrow conception of rhythm we meet with two assumptions current amongst musicians which are directly at variance with the theory of Rhythmic Unity. The first of these is that the outlines of pitch, intensity, and quality have nothing to do

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with rhythm; the second is that out of all four outlines that of pitch is the most important. The first assumption may be said to involve the second. It seems likely that no body of men can be more conservative than musicians, for these ideas, apart from their superficial appearance of truth, are rooted far back in musical history, and yet continue to thrive to this day untouched by the flail of time. Their historical cause will be considered later on, for the present it is sufficient to show that they exist in opposition to the facts of ethnology, of experience, of the unity of art, and of the musical consciousness.

The study of ethnology shows that it is impossible to form any accurate conception of primitive music without taking into consideration its connection with the art of dancing. Rhythm here attains a

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double expression, appealing to both eye and ear, and this accounts for dancing being admittedly the most rhythmic art in existence. It has never been without an accompaniment of noise reduced to time, and among tribes of very low intellectual development the feeling for time-outline is found exhibited in absolute perfection.

“It is scarcely possible to speak of the beginning of music without at the same time thinking of the dances with which it was intimately connected. This is, moreover, no accidental connection that can, under certain circumstances, be omitted as in the case of poetry and music ; it is more than a mere connection, it is a unified organism which led to an independent musical branch, so unified that it is neither possible to treat of the subject of primitive dance

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without primitive music, nor to make it even probable by means of ethnological examples that they were ever separated."

. . . "A general view of primitive music shows us that in the most primitive state the main constituent of music has always been rhythm, while melody has remained an accessory. . . . The most primitive music is in many cases no modulation of tone, but merely a rhythmical movement in one tone" (Dr. Wallaschek, "Primitive Music").

The two characteristic features of primitive music are the "decided prominence of the rhythmic as opposed to the melodic element," and the "monotony which results from the fact that most of the primitive songs are contained within a very narrow compass." "The sense of time seems to have been highly developed in man long before he had the faintest

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conception of what we call melody" (Mrs. Brown, "Musical Instruments").

"In the very rudest beginnings of this art, even before it has passed into a form in which it can properly be termed music, it is characterised by rhythm" (G. L. Raymond, "Rhythm and Harmony").

An examination of ancient folk-music, which is of course a later stage of primitive music, shows how high a development it had reached in early times. Nearly all the rhythmic phenomena of modern music can be traced to their origin in folk-song, and from the examples that have come down to us it is evident that folk-song of all nations is founded essentially upon rhythmic pulsation.

"The deep impression which the rhythmic property of music made on the human mind is clearly shown by

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the fact that, for several centuries in the history of modern European music, all the most popular dance tunes were the tunes of songs, and all the most favourite songs were turned into dance tunes" (Sir J. Stainer, "Music in its Relation to the Intellect and the Emotions," p. 14).

In discussing the well-known English round, "Summer is a-cumen-in," Mr. Rockstro remarks, "We find the melody pervaded by a freedom of rhythm, a merry graceful swing, immeasurably in advance of any kind of polyphonic music of earlier date than the Falas peculiar to the later decade of the sixteenth century—to which decade no critic has ever yet had the hardihood to refer the Rota. But this flowing rhythm is not at all in advance of many a folk-song of quite unfathomable antiquity. The merry grace

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of a popular melody is no proof of its late origin" (Groves' "Dictionary of Music," vol. iv. p. 2).

Thus it appears that in early music no doubt can exist as to which outline of music is the predominating one. But the position of this form of rhythm as a main factor of everyday musical experience is a matter that may have escaped notice.

When a certain rhythmic succession of musical tones has become familiar to the memory, the mind images to itself this familiar arrangement without needing to hear its actual physical sound. This is done by exertion of the auditory imagination, which is the power of evoking mental sound-images by a spontaneous act of memory. This power is called into existence by rhythmic feeling. Henceforward rhythmic feeling and the auditory imagination unite to form one

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action of the mind which may be named the "rhythmitonal imagination," since it forms an exact parallel of musical development. Its function at first is purely re-creative, reproducing what has been heard. In time, variations appear, two arrangements being unconsciously mixed together, until the stage of creation is reached, involving an arrangement of tones characteristic of individual feeling. On the other hand, persons are frequently to be met with who have sufficient perception of tone to enjoy music but at the same time are unable to sing any tune they can recognise by ear, or even to imitate correctly the pitch of any single given tone. The cause of this defect is a lack of rhythmitonal imagination. In order to sing a tone it must first be formed mentally, that is, imagined, and if the motive power that develops the imagina-

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tion is missing, a beginning is never made. Such persons are not tone-deaf or they could not take pleasure in music, but they cannot sing because they lack the mental pulse of rhythm.

It is impossible to recall a tune that has once been heard by noting only the order of its tones in pitch. But note the time-outline, and the tune will return at once to the memory. If pitch were the primary outline, the reverse would be the case.

It is a matter of common experience that a musical work remains unintelligible until its rhythmic form is grasped.

“The essential value of a motive (a short musical subject) lies in its rhythm and its general melodic figure, chiefly in the former. . . . So long as the rhythm is preserved intact all transformations impress the ear as more or less modified

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repetitions of the original idea" (W. S. B. Mathews, "Primer of Musical Forms").

This is to say that the pitch-outline may be varied at will, and these variations will appear simply as a development of the original form of the subject. But alter radically the time-outline, and a new subject is at once introduced. This could not be unless time-outline were the dominating factor.

We may therefore conclude that, besides appearing as the primary factor in early music, the outline of Time is clearly the essential one in the imagination, memory and perception of music. Its predominance over the other factors of music goes far to prove the theory of rhythmitonal development, that it is rhythm that leads to tone-relations and not tone-relations to rhythm. But if rhythm be the origin of all tone-relations, it is clear that these cannot be

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rightly understood except in their relations to rhythm, and this leads to the consideration of the unity of art.

It may be taken for granted that a perfect work of art must have unity, unity both of matter and of manner. It is also obvious that such unity does not signify monotony, but relation—that is, the relation of all the parts to the whole, as in a living organism. Strange as it may seem, this rhythmic principle has never yet been applied theoretically to the art of music.<sup>1</sup> In the Middle Ages the happy hunting-ground of the musical theorist was counterpoint and a cumbrous machinery of time-notation, long since discarded; later on he transferred his affections to harmony, but never in his

<sup>1</sup> The principle of unity was stated by Hauptmann, but was only partially applied by him, since Intensity and Quality are not considered in his theory.

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wildest dreams did the theorist imagine that either harmony or counterpoint could be made to account for time-order. Never, apparently, did he even perceive the necessity for any general principle that would relate all the factors of music to one another. Time-outline but seldom appealed to him, and still less did he stoop to consider force and colour, or perhaps the windings of counterpoint proved a maze in which, once entangled, no possibility existed of extrication therefrom. The fact at least remains that all theories of pitch-outline, though they may rival in ingenuity the definitions of rhythm, are relative to pitch only, and it is therefore clear that the central principle of unity must be sought for elsewhere. And it may well be asked, where shall this central principle be found, if not in rhythm? And granting

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that it may exist in rhythm, of what use are elaborate treatises that ignore the relation of harmony as a part to the whole, presenting it as a whole in itself? Further, since no pitch-outline can exist without some form of time - outline, why should attention be concentrated upon the former, practically ignoring the underlying conditions which render its very existence a possibility? In a word, why does unity exist in the creative work of an artist and disappear from the account given by others of that work?

The answer to this question involves recognition of a profound fact of the artistic consciousness, which in its relation to the art of music has not yet received the attention that it deserves. People are dimly aware that there is something apparently abnormal or at any

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rate unusual about the mental condition of a man of genius ; he has at least the power of accomplishing what other men are unable to do, but as to how he does it, or wherein his consciousness differs from that of others, as much is known perhaps as of the consciousness of primitive man. And since this creative action is invariably synthetic and not analytic, it does not make for self-consciousness, and therefore the genius himself can as a rule explain very little about it. Nor would description convey knowledge to the average mind, since we cannot know that of which we have had no experience. But the fact that needs to be appreciated is that this mind-action is non-intellectual, *i.e.* not of reasoned origin ; no one by taking thought can produce a true artwork ; the springs of music are deep in the emotional consciousness and do not

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touch the intellect. In this region the intellect is an interloper and a destroyer. The general condition of this mind-action is involuntary and intuitive ; it may, for want of a better word, be named Intuition. It is essentially of a dramatic nature, and has therefore dramatic unity of expression. It conceives the whole, and the parts spring therefrom as by a natural consequence. This is the state of consciousness wherein rhythm lives, moves, and has its being.

Taking this fundamental fact into consideration, we are in a position to perceive the cause of the failure of theorists to render a true account of the nature of music. It is not that such is impossible, but that the theorist must of necessity begin at the opposite end of things, and he has never yet succeeded in reaching the point from which the

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composer started. This starting-point is the conception of the whole, an intuitive conception, realised in the art-work. The form thus produced is intuitive by nature and origin, but all such form can be apprehended by the intellect. It is capable of translation into the terms of reasoned thought. The function of the intellect is analytic, and it can only reach the conception of the whole through understanding the relations of the parts. It must begin by apprehending the parts. We may take it that all theories of music are honest attempts at apprehension of the parts, but wherein they mislead is in their lack of any sense of the rhythmic relations of these parts to the whole. They are thus not only incomplete, but miss the conception of that for which theoretical study must exist, if it is to be of any

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practical service to the art. For want of such a thorough analytic conception of rhythm we still see the anomaly of a musical education training up composers in an ecclesiastical style that became a dead-letter centuries ago, a singular survival that bears further witness to the conservative nature of the musical mind. This readiness to accept traditional authority points to a degree of intellectual inertia which, in view of the enormous spread of systematic musical education, must form a dead block in the path of future development. Each generation falls a prey to the mechanical routine of the schools, and in its turn imposes it upon the next. Yet there are signs of awakening, and there is no doubt that some few musicians may be found who desire a more rational and comprehensive method, but who are

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obliged to teach upon established lines for want of any adequate alternative system.

It is the object of the present volume to indicate the broad lines of a new theory of music based upon the principle of Rhythmic Unity, to be followed by an educational text-book, containing a complete analysis of rhythmitonal form, which will weld all the various parts of musical education into one consistent and logical whole.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

THE evidences of the general principle of art formation, of early music, and of experience are all alike in favour of the theory of Rhythmic Unity ; yet the history of the art of music at first sight appears to prove the contrary. If it be assumed, as is commonly done, that modern music is the lineal descendant of the church-music of the Middle Ages, then it must follow that the art has originated in tone, and not rhythm, since, as is well known, rhythm in early church-music was a negligible factor. This is a time-honoured assumption which probably has never before been

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questioned, the credentials of which now require to be examined. The application of the evolutionary test must either confirm or destroy it as a theory of musical development, and this may be briefly stated as follows: between the earlier and later stages there should exist some affinity, since the difference will be one of degree and not of kind. We do not gather grapes of thorns.

The remarks of Sir Hubert Parry on early church-music are necessarily of that value which attaches to critical expert opinion. He writes as follows:—

“The whole aspect and texture of this old music is so different from the modern style, that it seems almost inconceivable to most people when they first come into contact with it that it could have had any musical effect at all, much less that it could be the direct source of the elaborate

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modern fabric. The most familiar rule that the tyro in the study of harmony learns to his cost, is to avoid consecutive fifths and octaves ; but the rule of the mediæval musician was distinctly and unquestionably to write more of them than of anything else. As has been pointed out before, the basis and substructure of many compositions was a series of such fifths and octaves disguised by ornamental notes and passing notes. In other particulars also the difference from modern views is very marked ; such as, for instance, in the use of discords. These early musicians used many discords, and very harsh ones too, but hardly ever in any way like modern composers. They were always purely accidental discords, and were in no sense either used as means of contrast, nor to propel the music on from point to point, as is their

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frequent function in modern times. The melodic outline of one part jostled against that of another voice part, and as it were disregarded what its neighbour was doing for a short while, till it landed upon some note which brought it again into consonance with its surroundings. . . . The musical ideas themselves were singularly vague and indefinite. Even the tunes which they (the church composers) borrowed were put into such enormously long notes that whatever individuality there was in them commonly disappeared. It is quite impossible to recognise a tune when single notes are prolonged to an extent equivalent to half-a-dozen bars in slow time. And this extension was mercilessly practised by the best mediæval musicians in order to lengthen their movements, and give more time for the spinning out of their strange kinds of

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counterpoint. Spontaneity was, of course, out of the question. The store of known technical resources was too limited, and every musical work was the product of arduous and laborious concentration, or of peculiar ingenuity. . . .

“The average quality of their works of every kind is marvellously crude, harsh, and incoherent. Almost every elementary rule of art which a modern musician holds inviolable is broken incessantly, and there are hardly any pieces of music, by the most learned or the most intelligent musician up to the fourteenth century which are not too rough and uncouth to be listened to by even the most liberal-minded and intelligent musician without such bewilderment as often ends in irrepressible laughter” (“Art of Music,” chap. iv. pp. 107, 119, 105).

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In the face of such an authority, the idea may be at once dismissed that any likeness exists between early church-music and modern music. Therefore the evolutionary test at once breaks down the accepted tradition. It is clear that this weird counterpoint is not music at all as we understand it, since, though composed of tones, it is almost entirely lacking in rhythmic relations and has not proceeded out of rhythm. This is the cause of its uncouth and hideous construction. With it the musical consciousness, the intuitive rhythmic feeling, has nothing to do. It is the outcome of the laboured conscious process of the intellect, and therefore lacks grace, beauty, and coherence, those outward tokens of the indwelling spirit. The intellect, set to make an art, proves itself but a clumsy machine. For a thousand years it

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laboured, and, as we are told, the results can only provoke us to laughter ! But since all these centuries of note-spinning did finally result in a system of consonance and dissonance, it has been generally assumed that they are the origin of harmony, and that we should have had no harmony and therefore no modern music without this painful process, an assumption which cannot be maintained in the face of modern discovery. It is indeed completely discredited by the facts of ethnology, by the certain existence in the early centuries of our era of popular instruments upon which harmony of some sort was unavoidable, by the fact that all early folk-tunes lend themselves to modern harmonic accompaniment, and that an MS. of the seventeenth century exists in letter notation full of tonic and dominant

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chords, which purports to be copied from one of the year 1100, and to give "the music of the Welsh" composed at that time, and which by Welsh scholars is from the internal evidence regarded as an authentic and dependable document.<sup>1</sup> Hence it is evident that the church had no need to invent harmony, but that, regarding the popular music as worldly and frivolous, which it doubtless often was, the monks set to work to devise an art which should bear no resemblance whatever to the fascinating but unholy strains that beguiled the outer world. And in this attempt they may be said to have succeeded. As already noticed, Mr. Rockstro finds it necessary to warn his readers against mistaking ancient folk-melodies for modern ones on account of their free rhythmic grace, but we are in

<sup>1</sup> See Grove's "Dictionary," vol. iv. p. 441.

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no such danger with regard to mediæval church-music. The difficulty is here to perceive music of any kind, ancient or modern, for music implies rhythmic feeling and not merely an assortment of tones. At the same time it is natural that rhythmic development should spring from the free outdoor life of the people rather than from the confinement and routine of monastic discipline. The rhythmic feeling is common to all men, but an indoor sedentary life is fatal to its development, since there is no call for its translation into rhythmic action. The impulse thus suppressed, practically ceases to exist. Therefore the church of the Middle Ages, desiring a music of her own, was confronted by the problem of forming an art whose natural foundations had long vanished from her horizon. How this problem was solved is well known.

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Starting from an arbitrary system, a misapprehension of Greek scales, tones were laboriously arranged to sound together according to well-defined rules, and this was called counterpoint, or "note against note." When it reached the period of its final development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which is the only part of it that can reasonably be called an art, certain elements of rhythmic form had partially leavened its construction, and this was in all probability due to the slow but sure filtering through of the rhythmic growth which was pressing upon it from outside. But since persistent labour is certain in the long run to yield some valuable result to mankind, so these monkish musicians, besides developing an art which posterity might have done without, at the same time slowly invented a system wherein to record it, a notation

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which has been indispensable to musical art. The fact that the church system, the Gregorian, which held the field completely from the fourth century to the close of the sixteenth, has descended to posterity by means of its notation, and the popular system of folk-song, with the exception of a few examples noted down by church-musicians, has come down to us through oral tradition only, completely accounts for the overlooking of the latter, and the enormous bulking of the former in musical history. It also accounts for the fact that the traditions of ancient church-music survive unchanged in modern thought. In this music the use of force and colour was almost accidental, and formed no part of its science, and rhythm had little to do with its harmony. Pitch-outline was all-important. The prevalence of these very ideas amongst

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modern musicians has already been remarked.

It is also probable that the invention of notation exercised upon mediæval composition an influence that we are unaccustomed to ascribe to it. The eye must have played a far more important part than the ear at this period, and in all probability the sound of the music was the result of the notation instead of being its originating cause, which may in some degree account for its extraordinary effect.<sup>1</sup> In course of time a fixed note-duration appeared out of the necessity for keeping singers together rather than from any inward impulse ; this was called Mensural music, and was from the first a science.

The feeling for rhythm never became

<sup>1</sup> It is *specially* recorded of Josquin Desprès (1440-1521) that he was in the habit of assembling singers at his house, who sang to him from his MSS., that he might hear how they sounded.

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strong enough to establish a definite key-system, nor to lead to any melodic development. The very vagueness of the tone-relations constitutes perhaps to modern ears the chief charm of this ecclesiastical art. Without the peculiar conditions then prevailing of complete severance of monastic from popular life, and without the amazing perseverance of church-musicians who toiled for centuries at a supremely difficult task, it is quite certain that the art of Palestrina could never have been built up into the perfection to which it ultimately attained. It is possible for a genius to create a living art out of the dry bones of pedantic formula, and this is the achievement of Palestrina. But this phase of the art of music remains a thing apart. It has been handed down to us in written records as an extinct tradition, for just at

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the moment of attaining to full maturity, it was swept ruthlessly away. The elaborate contrapuntal system vanished before the inflowing tide of popular rhythmitonal art, which had been gradually leavening the secular side of music with its intuitive charm, and its dual scale-system so fundamentally opposed to the multiform method of the church. The folk-system became, at the close of the sixteenth century, the essential foundation of cultivated music, and hence arose the mistaken idea that it was an artistic invention belonging to that period, for this was its first appearance in notation. Obviously it was an attempt to put new wine into old bottles, and accordingly a considerable time elapsed before the old record could be made to fit the new tone-movement, and the changes that it underwent were so fundamental that all notation prior to

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the seventeenth century requires for its deciphering a special study. During the transition period there appeared score-writing, bars, time-signatures, key-signatures, the modern notes, slurs, ties, staccato markings, and all indications of force-outline, with many other details; in short, all the general familiar features of our modern score, save the actual lines of the stave. It does not appear that the differences between the ecclesiastical and the rhythmitonal systems were ever formally recognised, but it seems that the change gradually crept in out of obedience to practical needs. And the old system died hard. The history of music from the close of the sixteenth century shows the existence of a long drawn-out struggle between rhythmic feeling on the one hand and the contrapuntal habit on the other. The fight is

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between Nature and Tradition, and in such a conflict Nature is certain to win at last, being the stronger, though it be centuries before she comes to her own.

The first result of the victory of folk-music at the close of the sixteenth century was to provide its adversary with material for a new lease of life. The Protestant church-musicians gradually absorbed the popular key-system and began to build up an art of counterpoint upon that basis. At the same time in secular music that curious combination of dance-form and counterpoint called the "Suite" made its appearance. This new development continued all through the seventeenth century and up to the middle of the eighteenth century, when it culminated in the genius of Bach. In his work so great and massive is the contrapuntal handling that the straitness of

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the time-outline passes unnoticed. A strong foundation of formal construction was indeed essential to the rearing of the contrapuntal edifice. It is an art full of the sound of many voices, a marvelously wrought web of the strands of pitch, yet resting upon a time-outline which can for the most part be compared only to a monotone. Even and regular as clock-work, a study in equal duration, its uniform character presents the most homogeneous and inarticulate form of pulsative rhythm that has ever existed in music. Yet such a degenerate time-outline is a necessity of contrapuntal art which consists in the predominance of pitch-outline, because the special tendency of the latter is towards regular time-division. Its most prominent tones are necessarily those that occur on the natural regular divisions of the bar, and if placed between

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these divisions the most striking pitch-effect will become at once a mere passing detail, or else suggest a mistake, unless there be a strong free time-outline to emphasise its existence. The general effect of a melody can be preserved by these naturally prominent tones when all the intervening ones are omitted or altered, such alteration producing the effect of variation of the original melody, as, for example, in the varied melody of Beethoven's C minor symphony. It is therefore absolutely necessary that all important pitch-effects (such as cadences, suspensions, and any pronounced discord or change of chord or key) should occur at these regular intervals, and the natural tendency of pitch-outline is thus inevitably towards monotony of time - division, a typical instance of which is the modern hymn-tune. The

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contrapuntal method, throwing a veil over the sharp outline produced by simple harmony, counteracts to a great extent the monotony of the regular chord-change by its many-voiced movement. But though an interesting form of art may thus for a time exist, these are not the normal conditions of musical evolution. In a truly rhythmitonal art time-outline must dominate, because it is naturally the most essentially rhythmical and therefore the primary outline. The predominance of pitch thus produces loss of the natural evolutionary balance, and such a predominance was the most striking characteristic of both the early and later Contrapuntal epochs. The developing power of these epochs was therefore of necessity limited to a pitch-development which required the subordination of all the other factors of music, and was doomed to extinction so soon as

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the material of variety in pitch-outline was exhausted. Each Contrapuntal era, however interesting in itself, forms, from the point of view of rhythmitonal evolution, a *cul-de-sac*. Once this point is reached, the natural rhythmic principle reasserts itself, and music reverts to the normal conditions of its development.

With the death of Bach this change took place; pitch-outline ceased to develop contrapuntally, and made way for a new rhythmic growth. The reason for this was not that the utmost development of pitch-outline had been realised, but that, owing to the prevalence of the mean-tone system of tuning and the state of orchestral instruments, only half the possibilities of the key-system were in general use, and that this material had been exhausted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bach was the first composer to adopt Equal Temperament, but a century passed before his example was generally followed in England.

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Even as late as in the Beethoven orchestra, the confined range of horns and trumpets exercised a very limiting effect upon modulation. In the slow movement of the C minor symphony, the appearance of the subject for the brass each time in the same key was doubtless due to the impossibility of getting it played on those particular instruments in any key besides C major.

The development of Sonata form was the triumph of Rhythm over Counterpoint, but it is a rhythm still shorn of half its natural freedom. The first attempt at developing a large musical form upon rhythmitonal lines proceeds in a tentative manner much hampered by contrapuntal tradition. This constraint stiffens the rhythm and produces that formal effect characteristic of the latter half of the eighteenth century. It was

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only the greatest composers, Beethoven and Schubert, who possessed the rhythmic genius able to master these conditions and fully to develop itself in spite of them. The fixed design to them became automatic, and instead of dominating their music as it had done that of their predecessors, it was rendered entirely subordinate to expression, and so paved the way for the emancipation of the later nineteenth century.

The further history of music is that of the gradual escape from traditional form, a history embodied largely in the work of one great composer. The art of Wagner was necessarily conditioned by the drama and stands apart from the development of purely instrumental music. Essentially a union of arts, it cannot be fully considered in a volume that deals with but one. At the same time so

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great has been the effect exerted by his music upon all branches of the art, that it remains the prevailing influence of the later nineteenth century. Fundamentally a rhythmic influence, its immediate effect has been in the direction of greater contrapuntal elaboration. For the nineteenth century brought about the complete solution of the problem of tuning and enlarged the boundaries of instruments and thus removed the obstructions in the path of pitch-development. The result has been an immense advance in pitch-outline, initiated by Wagner, and to this the discovery and study of the masterpieces of Bach have also not a little contributed. With the exception of the Hungarian and Bohemian Schools, which have always been markedly rhythmic, and to some extent of the Russian also, the present development of music is

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presenting the same fundamental conditions as those of the Contrapuntal eras. Modern polyphony differs as much from the organ counterpoint of Bach as that differed from the vocal counterpoint of Palestrina, but the underlying principle is identical—the predominance of pitch-outline over time-outline. In our day there is added a vast development of colour-outline which is also predominant over time-outline. History repeats itself, and this particular pitch-development will end, like its predecessors, in the *cul-de-sac*.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RHYTHMITONAL FOUNDATION

THE character of rhythm in nature is that of irregular recurrence, consisting of a series of undulations which are never at exactly equal distances, or of circles which are incomplete.

Man has evolved the feeling for precisely regular time-divisions out of the necessity for concerted action—that is, he has learned to keep strict time. This rhythmic perceptive feeling is essential to the art of music, and this affords an explanation of why there is no music in nature but the incoherent fragments of bird-song. Regular pulsative rhythm may be called the logic of music.

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Without exact time-division it is impossible to grasp rhythmic combinations.

At the same time the history of art reveals the fact that exact symmetry is but a stage in its evolution. For example, in Assyrian and Egyptian sculpture of natural forms exact symmetry prevails, regardless of existing variability of form in nature, but in Greek sculpture this rigidity has entirely disappeared.

All art passes from the Strict to the Free (which is equivalent to passage from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous), retaining only so much of the strict basis as is necessary to its intelligibility, and to its actual structure.

For the understanding of the art of music it is necessary to realise the rhythmic principle involved in Strict Form and in Free, both separately and with regard to mutual relations, and also

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to distinguish each kind of form in musical phenomena. This is less difficult than it appears, when once the fundamental principles have been grasped. These afford the clue to a maze that would otherwise rival in complexity the labyrinth of Crete. Viewed from the rhythmic standpoint, the apparently inextricable tangle of musical detail resolves itself into an exquisitely ordered design, marvellous alike in its simplicity of foundation and complexity of structure. This design has been the growth of ages, the work of no one race, nation or individual, but a form gradually coming to perfection, no man knowing how or whence, any more than he who sails his skiff down an unexplored river can tell whither the current may bear him. The form is our inheritance, and, musically speaking, it is as essential to us as the air we

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breathe. Without it we were musically dumb. No utterance could take place, no art of music could exist. In our natural admiration of the marvels of individual genius we are apt to overlook the still greater marvel of the existence of the common form, no conscious imitation of nature on the part of man, but an offspring of man and nature, having in one parent that which is to be found in man only, in the other that which is common to both. The first is the principle of exact relation which produces Strict Form, the second that of inexact relation which finds vent in Free Form. The first principle makes for coherence, because the exact relation is readily perceived and it is the intuitive perception of relations that makes music intelligible to us, and therefore coherent. In the mind of a hearer or performer

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of music this intuitive perception of relations awakes emotions of satisfaction and repose, appealing to his sense of beauty. But once let the relations become obvious, that is, be too easily perceived, and these emotions are superseded by a feeling of monotony which speedily involves boredom if the same relations continue to be presented. In this sense of monotony lies the necessity for Free Form, the necessity for a variation upon Strict Form which can only be made by the presentation of an inexact relation. Therefore the Free principle makes for variety and contrast, and its function is here to oppose and vary the exactness of Strict Form. A considerable degree of variety and opposition will produce a restless and agitating effect upon the mind. This is of course admissible in places where such an effect

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is needed. What is inadmissible is such an extreme degree of inexactness as will destroy the grasp of the exact relation. As the inexact relation is intuitively measured by the mind against the exact relation by which means the amount of its variation is perceived, it is clear that if the feeling for the exact relation be partially lost, music will appear incoherent or insufficiently related, while if it be entirely lost, the mind will be brought to a standstill in its grasp of rhythmic relations, and will therefore be unable to perceive music at all, but only chaotic tones. Hence Free Form when used with Strict is of a relative nature; first we must grasp the Strict and then the Free through the Strict. This fact forms the essential basis of music, and gives rise to the fundamental law of rhythmitonal evolution.

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The Law of the Union of Strict and Free Form is that the exact relation shall be clearly perceptible through the inexact relation.

It is impossible to apply this principle to music without taking account of the ethnological aspect of the art. Since the appearance of Dr. Wallaschek's valuable book, "Primitive Music," some fourteen years ago, there has been no excuse for ignorance of this important subject. Yet so satisfied are we to accept our art as the offspring of the Middle Ages, that the early evolution of music has received but little serious consideration. The study of primitive music, and even of folk-music, is in many quarters regarded as a fad. It has not yet begun to dawn upon the musical consciousness that these sources of music have anything to teach us modern musicians that is of value for

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us to know. It will surprise many people to hear that the whole essential basis of modern music which is missing from mediæval art is to be found, not only in folk-song, but in the music of those primitive peoples which is declared by eminent ethnologists to be wholly independent of European influence, and whose general culture is that of the Stone Age. But then, in order to find that basis, one must know what to look for. And it is the rhythmic conception of music that enables us to distinguish root from branch.

It has been already said that all art passes from Strict Form to Free. Therefore the Strict Form is evidently the primal thing, and the Free is the later development. But in order to apply this principle to music we must assign to Strict Form the musical phenomena that

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belong to it, which will give practical shape and form to an abstract conception.

All rhythmitonal development is either of an absolute<sup>1</sup> or relative nature. There are absolute Free Forms of all the outlines which are independent of Strict Form, exhibiting the irregular undulating rhythm of nature, and these have no effect upon the Union of Strict and Free Form, needing therefore in this place only a passing reference. Relative Free Form is that which relates to Strict Form, and the latter forms a series of fixed standards which represent exact relation and are the essential basis of music. The standards of Duration exhibit regular pulsative rhythm; those of Pitch, a regular circling rhythm, or in other words a complete circle in the

<sup>1</sup> The term "absolute" is here used in the sense of unrelated to a standard.

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sense of return to the point started from. There are no standards of Intensity or Quality. Force-outline and colour-outline are either fixed, as when one instrument or combination of instruments continues uniformly and without force-variation, or else, if variation takes place, as it usually does, it is dependent upon the number and nature of the instruments and voices employed—a matter for the composer's free choice. Strict Form is therefore virtually limited to Duration and Pitch and their respective outlines.

Much is taught about "time" in music, but until very recently one might seek in vain in any elementary primer for reference to the Time-beat, the outcome of that intuitive perception of time-division that can be assisted by counting but is not necessarily dependent upon any extraneous aid. Since strict pulsative

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rhythm is equal time-division, it is easy to see that we have here in the time-beat the standard of time-outline. The division is expressed in primitive music by means of alternate sound and silence, each beat being distinct from the one before and the one following it, and in modern music when not heard it is always understood. As no sound, whether musical or otherwise, can exist without some degree of intensity, accent, an intermittent degree of force-outline is used to emphasise Strict Form by indication of the time-beat, and when it becomes accent, force-outline ceases to be an absolute movement, and is relative to the standard of time-outline. Thus is formed a further composite standard, a grouping of time-beats, by means of one accented time-beat placed at regular intervals. Besides the alternation

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of sound and silence there is now the alternation of one louder and one softer sound, or of one louder and several softer. This may be called "strict accent" and this larger grouping is commonly supposed to be represented in notation by the bar, and it would be well if such were really the case, but what frequently happens is that the bar goes one way and the strict accent goes another at the good pleasure of the performer or conductor, or it does not go at all, a matter which may be commended to the consideration of composers.

The standard of Duration consists of the relative duration of tones indicated in the notes of music. Since time-outline relates to this standard as well as to the time-beat, and pitch-outline again relates to its own standards, it is clear that the words Strict and Free

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will not, without creating confusion, cover the whole ground, and that other words must be found to take their place which shall bear the more limited significance of being Strict or Free of a particular standard. Many of these words already exist. Equal and Unequal explain themselves in time-outline, which must of necessity consist of tones of either equal or unequal relative duration, and while Unequal time-outline may be either Strict or Free of the time-beat standard, it is impossible for Equal time-outline to be anything but Strict, since it embodies the time-beat principle of equal time-division.

The standards of Pitch represent exact relation by physical affinity. Affinity of synchronous pitch-relations is expressed by the word Consonance, and the standard

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of synchronous relative pitch is the common chord or triad, major and minor. Consonant and Dissonant in this relation also explain themselves, and pitch-outline in these conditions becomes synchronous, as it consists of the simultaneous combination of several parts. Such a combination is not necessarily harmony, except in Western music, which does not admit of a synchronous pitch-outline without the Consonant standard. The importance of this standard to Western ears is perceived in the fact that we are practically unable to conceive of music without it. A synchronous pitch-outline must be harmony, or it is not music. Yet in some Eastern music, notably in that of Java, a highly developed synchronous time-outline is found, the several parts of which are distinguished by vary-

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ing colour-outline, while the pitch-outline is purely Dissonant. It is clear that these musicians are bent upon freedom, and have dispensed with all standards save those of duration !

The expression of the rhythmic principle applied to pitch-outline has received the general name of Tonality. Judging from the fact of the complete omission of this word tonality from the theoretical treatises of Reicha, Marx, Weber, and Hauptmann in English translations, it would seem to be a word of very recent origin and one that is still waiting for accurate definition. Such definitions as the "element of key" and the "modern conception of key" may be dismissed on the ground of inadequacy and the fact that they merely explain one term by the use of another equally technical. It is only

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the rhythmic conception of music that can define tonality. In this connection it is seen at once to be the relations of all tones to a given Consonant centre, the exhibition of a complete circling rhythm.

The primary standard is the Tonic-chord used melodically or harmonically, and the composite standard is the Key. The melodic key consists of the diatonic scale major or minor, and the harmonic key consists of all known chords *used in relation to one tonic*.

That we are only just beginning to realise intellectually the functions of the Tonic and the Key in music is shown in the fact that no adjectives exist to express them. Nothing would seem more natural than that tonality should suggest "tonalitive," but the word has not hitherto appeared. And with the

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exception of "diatonic" there are no words to indicate the Strict and Free Forms of pitch-outline in respect of the tonalitive standards. The gap may be filled by "Syntonic" and "Atonic" to express severally tonic relations and non-tonic relations, and by "Unitonic" and "Modulative" to define relations that belong to the harmonic key-standard and those that pertain to subordinate tonics. Music that contains relations of this nature may be described as "key-centred." The only word in present use that suggests this larger set of relations is modulation, which is the act of passing from key to key. This word, therefore, strictly speaking, indicates the actual chords forming the transit, which, though necessary to key-relation, is not key-relation in itself.

The importance of having words that

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will indicate Strict and Free Form in all these various relations lies mainly in the fact that they all follow the Law of the Union of Strict and Free Form, which requires the predominance of Strict Form over Free in order to maintain unity and therefore coherence. With regard to time-outline, this principle is obvious enough. If we lose our grasp of the time-beat and the equal note-division, we lose our intuitive perception of the music. But in pitch-outline this is less evident, for in a circling rhythm Strict and Free cannot coexist. It possesses no parallel to that sense of contradiction which is produced in time-outline, for example, by syncopation, where the Free outline is necessarily in immediate conflict with the Strict. The time-beat is always there, for it is possible to grasp a

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Strict and a Free outline simultaneously, but the tonic is only there when it is sounding, since it is not possible to grasp mentally a Syntonic and an Atonic outline at the same moment, on account of the nature of pitch-relations. The only partial exceptions that occur are in the case of a tonic or dominant pedal,<sup>1</sup> and rare instances of a mixture of tonic and dominant harmonies. In both these cases the Syntonic impression is the stronger, though incompletely heard. Syntonic and Atonic outlines, therefore, as a general rule, exist only in alternation. The same is true of Unitonic and Modulative outlines, and yet it is necessary that in both cases the standard should predominate, else loss of balance will result. Out of this

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* a Syntonic tone held against a succession of Atonic chords.

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necessity arises the fundamental rhythmic principle of tonalitive movement. This consists in a departure from, and a return to the tonic ; an eccentric followed by a concentric movement ; the former Syntonic-Atonic, the latter Atonic-Syntonic. This movement may extend over many bars, and it finally merges into the larger movement of Unitonic and Modulative outline, which is the expression of precisely the same principle upon a larger scale. This latter has been one of the most important factors in tonalitive development. When the key is changed, involving a new tonic, it is obvious that all chord-relations must undergo readjustment. This radical change would in instrumental music (unassisted by word-outline<sup>1</sup>) destroy

<sup>1</sup> Where words are used, or a developing action is concerned, the key-centre may become superfluous, involving an incomplete rhythm.

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tonalitive unity, but for the emergence of the original chord-centre as key-centre. By this means all other keys are made relative, involving recognition of and ultimate return to the key-centre, thus completing the circle. It is even possible to establish subordinate key-centres during the course of modulation without destroying the sway of the original tonic, but clearly the greater the complexity of the tone-relations the greater is the difficulty of preserving the standard. Nothing, however, is more remarkable than the rapid growth of the harmonic key during the past century, and as the key-conception widens there is a corresponding extension of the rhythmic circle of modulation without loss of key-centred effect.

This brief sketch of the rhythmitonal basis is sufficient to show that Strict

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Form is limited to the following elements: (1) The Time-beat; (2) the Notes; (3) the Scale; (4) the Triad; (5) the Tonic; (6) the Key; these are the Standards of music. It remains to show by quotations from Dr. Wallaschek's book that these standards exist in primitive music.

(1) "They always keep time well, which here, as among all primitive people, is the chief point. . . . Drumming with sticks or on stretched deer-skins, or the clapping of hands and stamping of feet was evidently regarded as the simplest means to mark the rhythm."

(2) "Primitive music can be committed to notes in duple as well as in triple time. In many instances the change between these two divisions is so sudden and frequent that we have to note down the five-four time."

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(3) "Old Egyptian flutes, dating from the year 3000 B.C. (the Bronze Age), have a complete diatonic scale . . . pre-historic pipes have the first four tones of the diatonic scale, that is to say, the first of the equal halves of this scale. Diatonic intervals frequently occur on primitive instruments. . . . The supposition of the older music writers that the pentatonic scale is the earliest known cannot be maintained in the face of ethnological research."

(4) "As soon as music passes the mere rhythmical stage, the lowest races in the scale of men begin to sing in different parts, in intervals as well as with a bass accompaniment. Thus harmony does not seem to be so new an invention as is commonly supposed, nor is it confined to European races."

(5, 6) "Both major and minor keys

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occur among primitive races . . . it does not seem to be more difficult to sing in the minor key than in the major. . . . Neither harmony nor the germs of counterpoint are entirely unknown to primitive nations, and it would seem, from all the examples I was able to collect, that the principle of tonality is in most cases unmistakable" ("Primitive Music").

As has been already noticed, primitive music is far more strongly developed in pulsative rhythm than in tonality, yet both show the essential basis of Strict Form. The difference between them is due to the natural order in which the factors of evolution develop. Time-outline precedes pitch-outline, because it is the easiest to grasp. Therefore, it shows in many cases a freedom that contrasts curiously with the mono-

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tony in pitch-outline. Monotony it appears to us, but to the savage mind doubtless represents no less than a satisfying coherence. Nothing is more certain than that the balance that shall avoid monotony on the one hand and incoherence on the other, swings unceasingly through the ages, and each age, even each generation, must make its own adjustment. As Strict Form becomes established, it is presently ousted by Free Form, till at length only the irreducible minimum of Strict Form remains, and even then the relative portion of space allotted to it will grow less and less. To realise this one has but to think of the incessant reiteration of that well-worn tonalitive idiom, the full cadence, in the music of little more than a century ago, and to note its gradual disappearance from modern music as the perception

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of tonality strengthened its hold. Again, the modern growth of discords is the natural correlative of the growth of the rhythmitonal imagination that can now perceive pitch-relations through a mass of discords that would have completely obscured them a century ago. All special rules for the employment of discords are necessarily of a temporary character, and the sole arbiter is the Law of Strict and Free Form interpreted by each generation and, to some extent, by each individual for himself.

From this it may be perceived that monotony and incoherence are in themselves only relative terms. It is evident that to a mind undeveloped in rhythmitonal perception form-relations may be obscure that to the cultured mind are perfectly clear. Hence the unrhythmical mind will delight in that music which,

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by its obviousness, is intolerable to the rhythmical mind, while the latter will find the height of happiness in listening to music which, to the unrhythmical mind, is as a foreign tongue. This suggests an explanation of the wide diversity of opinion upon musical works. It is inevitable that opinions should differ as minds differ, and the mental differences thus indicated point to varying stages in rhythmital development as much as to underlying variations of temperament. Since the practice of music is no longer essential to the maintenance of life in general, as was the case in the primitive art,<sup>1</sup> a wide amount of inequality of rhythmic perception appears amongst individuals. Degeneration set in long ago, and the majority fall far below the rhythmic capacity of the primitive savage.

<sup>1</sup> See "Primitive Music," p. 276. R. Wallaschek.

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Thus, apart from those who follow music as a profession, society in general divides itself into the musical and the unmusical, and these again are merely relative terms. There are but few people in any class of society who cannot enjoy some kind of music, provided its rhythmic relations are sufficiently obvious to be intelligible to their rhythmic capacity. What is of course meant is that they cannot appreciate what are generally regarded to be the great works of music.

After passing the general folk-song period, music ceased to be the art of the people and became the serious study of a small minority. From this cause it has both lost and gained as an art, but the point at present to be noticed is this, that since the majority has lost the habit and therefore to a great extent the capacity of rhythmic perception, it is quite unable

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to judge of what is actually monotony and what is incoherence in the present stage of musical development. Indeed, it is undeniable that the music upon which its affections are set bears unmistakable signs of degeneracy rather than of that simplicity which characterises the developing period of national art. It is then only the minority who are in a position to judge of musical effect, and though it must be confessed that, even within the profession itself, the diversity of opinion is sufficiently bewildering, yet the judgment of this minority as a whole does represent a consensus of opinion upon what are to be regarded as the great works of music of former time, and if the exercise of the rhythmic perception were admitted to be essential, and musical education were re-organised upon these lines, there is no

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reason that this minority or even a majority should not be able to judge also of the music of its own times, which, from all points of view, might appear to be even more desirable. Too much, indeed, has been lost already by leaving contemporary genius to starve and encouraging the production of mediocrity, or by absorption in the music of the past to the exclusion of the present. This has a twofold cause. Firstly, a backward and lethargic condition of rhythmic intuition which is thus unable to grasp anything new in rhythmitonal combinations ; secondly, the complete absence of accurate intellectual knowledge of the structure of music. Undeniably, the first cause is the most vital, but nothing can here be done beyond pointing it out and emphasising its importance. The intuitive consciousness of music is not to be

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affected by the use of any words about music though spoken with the tongues of angels, but only in the practice and hearing of the art itself. At the same time, if the right intellectual knowledge could be sown abroad till it became the common property not only of the profession, but of all who interest themselves in music, intelligent judgment would take the place of the vague personal impressions which are now made to do duty for criticism.

The development of the race is the development of the individual; the one is the growth of an age, the other of a lifetime, but the road is the same road for both. The principle that is found to exist in Strict and Free Form is applicable to all branches of musical education. We must grasp the Strict and let the Free come in of itself. This

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it is bound to do so long as the mind remains a live growth and does not partake of the nature of an air-tight compartment. Once we have firm hold of the essential strict foundation by the hearing of the ear, it will cease to hamper us, as its perception will become an automatic process, leaving the imagination free to roam as it will, and thus gradually to bring about the right adjustment.

If the present obstructions in the path of music were removed, slowly but inevitably the rhythmic consciousness would assert itself and lead the way to "fresh woods, and pastures new."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FORM-IMAGE

STRICT Form brings us the expected, Free Form the unexpected. The one is the world of the known, from which we start, the other the realm of the unknown to which we go. In the music of a composer of genius, the unexpected is always appropriate and generally inevitable. But with the imitative composer this is not so. His mind lacks sufficient rhythmic initiative to enable it to strike out its own path ; he moves naturally and securely in the ways of his predecessors or else struggles precariously out of them. This is always manifest, and the unexpected is here

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seldom appropriate and never inevitable. It is due to the lack of relation. Free Form is inexact relation, and it is the inexactness that opens the door to the unexpected, but still there must always be relation. It is this finer sense of artistic relation, which is unity, exhibited throughout the whole of a composition, determining the form and the due emphasis of every detail, that raises the work of the great artists above their contemporaries. It is the conception of the rhythmic form-image, the fruit of the rhythmitonal imagination, assisted by an experienced critical knowledge of the fundamental conditions of art.

It should be the aim of education to encourage the imagination and to lay the right foundation of critical knowledge; beyond this every man must build for himself. That so few comparatively

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have any notion of how to build for themselves is because imagination has been discouraged and the right foundation has not been laid. If we made a healthy child to go on crutches instead of teaching it to walk, it would surely lose the natural use of its limbs and be a cripple for life. But we force the mental crutches of a fixed mode of composition upon our young composers, paralysing their natural powers, under the impression that they cannot learn to write without such assistance, and have not perceived that we are thus producing a crippled art. The national lack of genius is obvious, and we ignorantly lay the blame on Nature, having first destroyed her free gift. It will never be known how much music of charm and interest has thus been lost to the world. Though the creative

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genius is less common than the re-creative, it is impossible to suppose that all imitative composers have mistaken their vocation and ought to be performing other men's works instead of writing their own. The re-creative instinct asserts itself early, being the way of least resistance, and the margin of individual freedom permissible to performance satisfies its desires. But the desire for creation is the desire for a greater freedom than this, a freedom that can only be attained by the finding of its own path from the beginning. And there is no art that can so completely satisfy this desire as music, because, though its law is stricter than that of any other art, its freedom is a greater freedom. When, therefore, we find the bulk of modern music exhibiting no freedom at all, or else an in-

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artistic freedom devoid of balance, it is clear that its composers have missed what they set out to find. And this could not have happened unless their creative imagination had been stifled just at the moment when there was the possibility either of stifling or of nursing it into strength. To bring the imagination under the rule of the intellect is inevitably to kill its creative power. It thus becomes the instrument of the intellect instead of being the instrument of the emotions, and ceasing to have any rhythmic initiative, is unable to conceive rhythmic form. It imitates instead of originating. Music composed by means of reasoned action is invariably imitative and unemotional, lacking the form-image, however skillfully it may be devised. It is not art, but the imitation of art. Only the

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rhythmitonal imagination springing out of rhythmic feeling can create music.

Thus it is that absence of teaching is much less dangerous than wrong teaching. In view of the prevalence of modern theories that can see only Strict Form in music, that enforce deliberate imitation of models from which rigid laws of form are deduced, that approach works of art with the foot-rule and explain away all discrepancies in measurement by ingenious contrivances of "elision" and "prolongation," the existence of Free Form cannot be too strongly emphasised. If, in order to support a theory, it is necessary to assume the existence in a work of art of *what is not there*, or to apologise for what is there, that theory stands self-condemned. The imaginary bars of "elision" have never

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existed outside the brain of the theorist, the so-called bars of "prolongation" are essential to the form, or they would not be there at all. The form of music is not a thing that can possibly exist apart from what is written, for the music is the form.

But it is, after all, not so much the bare existence of Free Form that requires to be stated, as its relations with Strict Form. It is not there as a freak, or as the result of chance, but as an integral part of rhythmitonal evolution. When it is clearly perceived that Free Form is the product of a free imagination, that is, an imagination producing the rhythmic form-image under its natural conditions as the instrument of feeling and not of the intellect, the futility of Strict Form theories must become apparent to every one. They are at the best a misapprehension

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of the early stage of rhythmitonal development. In this early stage, the relations of Strict and Free Form were necessarily so different from those they now assume, as to give to such a mistake some appearance of truth. Strict Form being more easily perceived than Free Form, the rhythmic feeling in its perceptive capacity instinctively seeks the Strict until it has fully grasped its relations, and only when these are become familiar, and therefore wearisome, does it go farther afield to find free relations. As already stated, by the law of evolution all art must pass from Strict Form to Free. But an art that remains Strict is one of arrested development, and in the case of music natural development was long arrested by the growth of Contrapuntal form, which divorced the imagination from its natural association with rhythmic feeling,

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and brought it under the sway of the intellect. Under these conditions free development was an impossibility, since the Contrapuntal style demands a strict time-outline, and it was not until men grew weary of counterpoint that a Rhythmitonal art could arise. The early composers of the symphony and sonata forms were forming a new art, with nothing but rhythmic feeling to guide them, with no understanding of what they were doing, and with an inheritance of contrapuntal and therefore strict habit which could not fail to be a stumbling-block in their path. The only practical possibility was a form in which the strict relations should largely predominate over the free, and for this reason we find Strict Form then occupying the position now accorded to it by theorists, but from which the time-spirit has long since

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driven it. Directly Strict Form becomes obvious, it disappears. And in the works of Haydn, the folk-musician, we find constant attempts at a greater freedom in the details of composition. Based as the art must be upon Strict Form, through necessities of concerted action and of coherence, its imaginative development is ever seeking to establish finer, freer relations. But at this stage the rhythmical imagination was unable to form free outlines of any magnitude, and therefore fell back by necessity upon the scaffolding of a consciously worked-out design. This scaffolding, so obvious to us in the works of Haydn and Mozart, is adopted by Beethoven, but by him is gradually absorbed until it becomes an integral though unobtrusive part of his architecture. What he might have done without it is a matter of pure speculation,

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but it is certain that, lacking these familiar features of form, his work must have been quite unintelligible to his own and succeeding generations, in proof of which one may point to the *Missa Solemnis*, even now but little understood. Since his time music has continued to reach out blindly and gropingly after her natural development. On the harmonic side immense advance has been made, and these free relations seem far more easily grasped than those of synchronous time-outline. This is due to the nature of the relations of Duration and Pitch respectively. One main cause of difference between natural Rhythmitonal form and Contrapuntal form is that the latter by means of pitch-relations aimed at equality of interest in each outline, whereas the former relating in the first place to duration, requires one outline

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of predominating interest, and relative accessory ones. This results from the essential difference in the natures of duration and pitch. The synchronous combinations of pitch at any given point have in consonance and dissonance a natural affinity and also a contrast that is lacking to duration, and the ear has therefore the assistance of a well-defined synchronous combination, as well as a successive one, to enable it to grasp the tone-movement. Time-outlines, on the contrary, can only be grasped individually, first as a succession, then realised as a whole, and finally put together. This is impossible, except under the conditions above indicated. Time-outlines of strong individuality tend to destroy one another. It is not impossible to combine two leading outlines, but unless they vary greatly from one another

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in the forms of pitch and colour also, the synchronous outlines will become confused to the ear, or one will inevitably predominate, and the other be reduced to an accessory. This fact, besides accounting for the slowness of the development of synchronous time-outline, has profound and far-reaching consequences. The natural predominance of one time-outline means the predominance of the rhythmitonal Idea.

A rhythmic force, clothing itself spontaneously in a changing garment of pitch, force, and colour, this is in its highest form a direct revelation of the personality of the composer that can determine the form-image of a whole tone-movement. Though in the bar, it is not of the bar, for its origin and development are free. It is the crowning glory of Free Form, the hall-mark

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of genius. With the exception of purely Contrapuntal art no music that is not imaged out of original ideas has ever lived much beyond its own generation. It is the life of the simplest folk-song, and equally of the most elaborate works of the great composers. The only difference between the folk-tune and the great art-work is one of development. The potentialities of the folk-song are undeveloped, in the art-work they are realised. It is not one action of the mind that creates and another that develops, but the rhythmitonal imagination that creates is also the formative power, when allowed its free action, unhampered by the intellect. It is evident that development as taught in the schools that proceeds out of no creative germ, and is at the best an imitation of the development proper to another man's idea, is

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worse than useless, for it must destroy the gift of natural form-imaging that is essential to style in music. That natural development in the early stage shows little originality does not affect the argument ; youth is given to unconscious imitation in other departments beside music ; it is a natural and inevitable stage of early mental growth. But conscious and deliberate imitation is not natural, and it is this that is destructive of originality.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RHYTHMITONAL IDEA

CONSIDERABLE confusion exists in the subject of the relations of the rhythmitonal Idea with thought. It is sometimes said to express thought. Confusion is frequently caused by the use of one word to convey two things, and especially is this the case when these are abstract ideas, since there is then no means of distinguishing between the two. This is what has happened with the word "thought." It used indiscriminately to convey the synthetic intuitive action of the imagination, and also the analytic reasoned processes of the intellect. Those who apply the term to music are right if

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they mean the action of the imagination, but they are wrong if they mean that of the intellect. In order to avoid confusion it will be necessary to confine the term to one meaning only, and it seems to be claimed by the intellectual process, since thought does undoubtedly imply an intellectual content, and not necessarily an imaginative origin.

The confusion has apparently arisen out of the art of literature, which though the simplest of arts in its rhythmic relations, is, from the point of view of psychology, the most complicated of them all. This is due to the nature of language, which is its rough material. Language has been slowly formed by thinking beings in order, firstly to distinguish objects by name, secondly to express thought. It is a system of

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symbols, for by no other means than by signs and symbols can objects be named or thought be expressed. Each word is a sound symbolic of some object or thought, gradually evolved to denote that particular object or thought, and so understood by the community. But language does not become an art, until it serves as rough material for the creation of the imaginative idea and its development. Then we have an imaginative action working upon symbolic material, which is itself the result of an intellectual process, and thus the literary art combines imagination with the symbols of intellect. Those who would make music also symbolic forget that no such process has evolved tones. No tone or rhythmic order of tones has ever conveyed a new thought, because there is no analytic relation between tone

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and thought, such as exists between word and thought.

The rhythmitonal Idea is the sudden appearance in the mind of an auditory image, the image of a sequence of rhythmic tones. Of whatever process has led up to this sudden appearance the mind is unconscious. Nothing could be more different from the slow conscious process of thought.

The Idea possesses an expanding power which is in proportion to the force of creative energy expended upon its birth. This expansion, consisting of ever-varying repetition, is called development or working-out. These are terms common to all the arts. No word is used to cover the whole process of idea and development in the same way as the word "thought" covers the whole of the intellectual process. We speak of "a

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thought" and also of "thought," but the word "idea" can only be used in the first or specialised sense. The need for some such general term in music is shown by the frequent use of such words as "language" and "expression," both of which are apt to be misleading as suggesting the intellectual process. Thought is expressed by means of words, but the idea is not expressed by means of tones; it is actually present in the tones, and can by no manner of means be dissociated therefrom. The tones are not symbolic, but that particular selection and arrangement of tones *is the idea*. It would greatly aid the common understanding of music if the terms "language" and "expression" could be struck out of its vocabulary and the simple word "utterance" substituted for them. Music has a voice, and taken as a whole it is essentially a

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human imaginative utterance, and there is no art to which the same word can be so fittingly applied. It meets the case of those who would protest against the degradation of music into a mere tone-pattern equally with those who would clear away the confusion between music and the literary art, since an utterance cannot be merely a decoration, and yet it does not involve necessarily the use of words. Utterance in music therefore consists of the Idea and its development, imaged out of the emotional consciousness.

The Idea presents a new combination in a degree that is possible to no other art. It is as though a poet should speak in words of his own creation. Words so formed could not be understood, but a new rhythmitonal combination is referred intuitively to the familiar

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standards of duration and pitch, and its relations are thus made directly perceptible. The most remarkable thing about the Idea is that it creates its unique impression simply by the rearrangement of familiar material common to the whole art. Break up the Idea, and you find nothing to take the place of words in language, only rhythmic figures, intervals, and single notes which may correspond to the breaking up of a sentence into syllables and single letters. These are the mere elements of construction, no one of which by itself is capable of suggesting in the remotest degree the effect produced by the new combination. In what way these meaningless figures and intervals enter into the mind of man, and become so inextricably woven into his personality as to reappear a veritable utterance of his

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soul is and remains the great mystery of creation. It is a mystery entirely unelucidated by consciousness. To name a process is not to explain it, but merely to mark it off from other processes which can be explained, and can be shown to differ in results. The art of music provides the materials, a few figures, a few intervals, an absurdly limited stock compared with the resources of any language, and man creates an utterance that for beauty, individuality, and expressiveness has in proportion to its brevity no equal in any other art. Between the common stock and the individual Idea we perceive the chasm, but the bridge crossing it is a blank in the mind. On one side the intervals, on the other side the Idea.

An examination of the most notable Ideas of music shows that few of them are at all alike in structure, the features

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of variability far outweighing those of similarity. Once a genius has passed the period of adolescence, it is a rare thing to find anything suggestive of another individual in his ideas. They are not all of equal importance; some arise from the depths of his personality, others float upon the surface. From the former comes the music of profound emotion, from the latter that which is exquisitely pleasurable. Each has its function in human life, and upon both, but especially upon the deeper utterance, lies the distinctive stamp of style. In order to unfold the many small technical peculiarities, the particular way in which a little thing is done, the reiteration of which is what constitutes a distinctive style, it would be necessary to examine a composer's work in its totality. Even then the style would be found to consist

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in an ever-varying combination of habitual methods that relate to the minutest detail, each detail being of slight importance except in its relation to the sum of the whole. Style, like the Idea from which it springs, is a unity, but it is a free, an ever-changing unity, that will vary with each individual. However interesting a complete technical analysis of the style of any one composer might prove, it is the work of the specialist in music, for it is fruitless as affording material out of which general principles may be deduced. We cannot say, "this is right because it is done in this particular way," nor "this is wrong because it is done differently." The first way is right for one composer, because it is in harmony with his style, the second way, for the same reason, is right for another, and both may be wrong for a third. In

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music it is the individual who counts, and always the individual. Nothing in the way of a rule or a principle can rightly be laid down to restrict or direct natural development except those that relate to the Law of the Union of Strict and Free Form. The utterance must preserve sufficient of the Equal and Strict time-outline to make the standards of duration clear ; it must have tonality ; if it be in synchronous pitch-outline it must preserve the Consonant standard, which means that the movement of each outline must relate to all the rest, and a sufficient relation between all the synchronous outlines as a whole must be readily perceptible. In other words, the harmony must be correct. It is significant that though no one ever thinks of teaching time-outline or tonality, as such, the greater part of the energies

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of musical educators has been expended in the teaching of harmony and counterpoint. The ancient counterpoint, as already explained, is simply a purely arbitrary system of synchronous pitch-outline which was formed before the discovery of tonality by the musical profession, and only somewhat modified to bring it into relations with the standards of pitch-outline, when tonality could no longer be ignored. Modern counterpoint or polyphony is synchronous pitch-outline considered in its relations both to the Consonant and tonalitive standards. Harmony is simply the naming of the united outlines at any given time-beat in their relation to consonance and to tonality, by which means a collective chord-movement is perceived distinctive from the succession of each single outline. In all these outlines the

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question of right or wrong is simply that of preserving the needful standards, and is therefore referable to the Law of the Union of Strict and Free Form. The fact that endless rules have been formulated without reference to this law merely shows that rhythmitonal relations were not understood as a whole, and that therefore rules were made for each particular case. The difference in working between these rules and the general law is that the former required only an effort of memory, while the latter demands an exertion of the rhythmitonal imagination and also of the critical faculty to detect whether or no the conditions of the law have been fulfilled. The one is the mechanical method of routine, the other aims at awakening the intelligence and putting the student in possession of knowledge which will enable him to

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judge for himself. But here, as elsewhere, practice must go before precept. The principle that has been followed unintentionally with regard to tonality of allowing it to soak gradually into the mind with every bar of music that is heard or sung from babyhood, until it becomes impossible for the mind to think of music without tonality, this principle requires to be followed intentionally with regard to the less easily detected Consonant standard. The hearing and singing of good part-songs should bring this about, and if the ear is encouraged to notice the part-movement it will soon begin to detect right and wrong for itself, irrespective of the reason why. By the time the mind has reached the point of originating an Idea, the standards will have become so essentially a second nature, that it will be quite

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unable to imagine music without them. Therefore the Idea and all that develops out of it will of necessity bear the stamp of these standards, and thus become generally intelligible. When, however, the composer reaches the point of perceiving new rhythmitonal relations that to his contemporaries appear to involve chaos because of their inability to perceive them, it does not mean that he has lost sight of the standards, but that he has extended the possibilities of Free Form in its relations to Strict Form. In course of time this is perceived, and a new generation accepts with delight what its fathers had rejected with violence and scorn. This fact proves the all-importance to music of the Standards of Strict Form as the main factor of its intelligibility as an utterance, of its intelligibility, that is, to the emotions and

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not to the intellect. The rhythmitonal Idea and its development must be spontaneously grasped by rhythmic feeling, which forms the perceptive faculty of music, else the emotional import will remain a blank or at the most be apprehended as a vague sense of atmosphere. No auditory imagination is required of the hearer of music, since the actual tone is all presented to him ; he has but to feel its relations, and this perceptive feeling requires no education but that of use. The more he hears the more he will be able to hear ; the tones of music instead of fleeting past him will be captured by rhythmitonal memory and perceived in their relations to those that precede and follow, and in time the greater rhythmic proportions of a composition will become apparent, all still in their relations to the unchanging

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standards. This is all a matter of intuitive perception, and is a means to an end. Directly it is made an end, and the mind is consciously fixed upon it as an end, music becomes for that hearer a mere tone-pattern. The play of tone absorbs the mind to the exclusion of all else. However great the emotional utterance, it will fall upon deaf ears. Hence it may happen that to the uneducated in music will be revealed an utterance that is hidden from the professional musician, who through his absorption in the means has forgotten the end. To enter by sympathy into the inspiration of the composer is the end in the hearing of music.

## CHAPTER VI

### ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS

IN the palmy days of sonata form, when the form had become the common property of all composers, such a thing as original development of a whole work had not begun to dawn upon the general musical consciousness. The form prescribed the number of the ideas, "subjects" as they were called, the exact manner and order of their presentment and the keys in which they were to appear; it divided the whole into well-defined sections, and the only chance for individual utterance lay in the "development section" of the middle. With imitative development presented as the

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normal condition, and original development as the mere variation upon it, there was no great likelihood of the average composer making much of his chance. Trained to imitate and to regard the liberties taken with the form by Beethoven as the eccentricities of genius, his "development section" differed little from that of other people. And the deadly monotony thus produced spread even further. It affected the texture of the ideas themselves. These too became all alike. Individual utterance vanished and instrumental music was merely decorative, and a dull decoration at the best.

The influence that lifted music out of this depressing rut of the commonplace was already at work in the vocal side of the art. Gradually song-form or forms analogous crept into instrumental music, but it was reserved for Wagner to shoulder

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the strict style of development virtually out of existence. This labour of Hercules has hitherto not been viewed in its true light. Wagner himself misunderstood its bearings, and the mistake at the time was inevitable. The new impulse given to music, producing such marvellous and unlooked-for results, came obviously from the art of poetry when the ideas of the two arts were associated. What more natural than to conclude that poetry must be the stronger art of the two, and that its influence was necessary in order to "fertilise" music, that is, to raise music to its highest order of utterance?

It is remarkable that the complete refutation of this theory is afforded by Wagner's own music-dramas. His thought ever striving to keep pace with his utterance, followed darkly and uncertainly upon the heels of his imagination and now and

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again went astray out of the path. But his imagination could not lead him astray, and it invariably governed his artistic action. Hence the thing that took place was not the dramatic development of music by the relinquishing of its own natural form-image and its subordination to the requirements of dramatic art, but the complete triumphing of the art of music over poetry, drama, theories and all other considerations. Such a consummation could only have been achieved by the highest order of musical genius, working upon the lines of natural development.

The explanation of the part played by poetry in the combination is a very simple one. Association of ideas can exist between all the arts, but as music and poetry are both arts of sound exhibiting rhythmic movement, the correspondence is here far

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closer. While poetry knows nothing of the strict pulsative rhythm of music, it had developed its own simple free rhythmic relations, while the complex form of music was still in a very early stage. The explanation of the sudden and amazing development of music under the influence of poetry above and beyond the stimulus of associated ideas, is that a great genius had intuitively discovered the form that underlies and is common to both arts. The service done by poetry to music was the breaking of the chains of the strict forms that bound her, and the setting of music free to accomplish her own destiny.

True imaginative utterance of whatever kind is essentially dramatic by nature (in the broadest sense of the word), and therefore the dramatic nature of music affiliates closely to the dramatic nature of poetry.

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But in a combination of two differing arts it is impossible that their development can exactly coincide, and though there will be a certain amount of give and take, the weaker will go to the wall. Therefore in this combination poetry has commonly suffered, for the utterance of music, requiring a much longer space of time for its full development than that of poetry, has demanded much senseless word-repetition, and it becomes no longer possible to preserve entirely the natural rhythm and pauses of language. The utter callousness of the earlier composers with regard to the claims of poetry in vocal music finds some justification in the fact that so long as music was governed by Strict Form, it was impossible to give poetry any rights without spoiling the musical development, and these composers stood

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in no doubt of which of the two was the more important. Herein they showed their sense, for it was obviously better to spoil the weaker art and preserve the stronger, than to spoil both. Poetry, however, has had its revenge, and the very different position that it now occupies in vocal music is due to the development of Free Form in music generally. The difficulties of combination can now to a great extent be overcome, and even from the poetic point of view are frequently compensated by the enormous gain to poetry in the strong emotional appeal of music.

The point now arises, if Wagner had thus unconsciously struck upon the natural free development of music, why did he still require the aid of poetry and the drama in producing his music? The answer is twofold. Firstly, that Wagner had also a

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poetic imagination to satisfy, that called out for the drama, and was at the same time so inextricably woven in with his musical imagination, that he himself underrated the strength of the latter, the trend of all his theories forbidding an independent musical art of the future. Secondly, in view of his tremendous imaginative output during the period of his greatest creative activity, it was practically impossible even for him in advancing years to have abandoned all his previous habits of composition. Nevertheless Wagner's musical imagination did all and even more than could have been expected of it. Many of his preludes are perfect absolute music, and though they sprang in his mind from the association with a poetic idea, no such idea can add to the greatness of their musical utterance.

The immediate influence of Wagner,

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however, upon his own generation and the next, has been destructive of the growth of absolute music, by reason of his insistence upon poetry as a necessary accompaniment of music. Broadly speaking, the result has been that all absolute music fell into the category of a tone-pattern, and only relative music (music in immediate association with poetry), was allowed the rights of emotional utterance. Thus "poetic" and "emotional" came to be regarded as convertible terms when applied to music. The great music of Beethoven, being obviously emotional, had to be accounted for by the supposition that a kind of poetic drama was going on in Beethoven's mind when he composed this music. In support of this fanciful suggestion, not a particle of historical evidence can be adduced. Beethoven was fond of the poetry of Goethe

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and the dramas of Shakespeare, but there is nothing to show that he ever in his life wrote a line of original poetry. Had the poetry been in his head, it was bound to have come down on to paper. He himself writes to a friend of the "dead" letter (of the alphabet) and the "living" note, which is in itself strongly significant. The one appealed to the living imagination, the other did not. Such poetic imagination as he possessed was in no sense creative, and never rose above a very ordinary, not to say commonplace level upon the few occasions when it spoke in the mighty presence of his musical imagination. To call the music of Beethoven "programme" music is to destroy the meaning of that word. We have hitherto agreed in confining the use of the term "programme" to something that is planned beforehand. If a hearer

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of Beethoven's music exercise his own poetic imagination in the hearing, he interprets it according to his own idiosyncrasy. An interpretation cannot possibly be a programme, since it is deduced from the contents of the work in question, whereas the programme is the preconceived statement of what those contents are. Any hearer may supply an interpretation, the composer only can provide the programme, and to place a poetic interpretation upon music does not in any sense make it into programme music. Such a use of the term merely renders abortive the distinguishing characteristic of real programme music. It is clear that the origin of all these ideas about absolute music in general and Beethoven in particular rests with Wagner, and it affords a remarkable proof of his theoretical as distinct from his artistic

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influence that they not only find acceptance, but are even still being retailed as a novelty. They ignore the existence of the musical imagination except as a handmaid to poetry or to poetic ideas, and are based upon a misunderstanding of the fundamental rhythmic nature of musical inspiration. At the same time in estimating the value of what Wagner has done for music, it must not be overlooked that by means of this close association of musical with poetic ideas, what may be termed the "audience" of music has been enormously enlarged. For one person who possesses musical imagination in any strength there are probably ninety-nine or more whose poetic imagination is uppermost, and whose rhythmic feeling can best be stimulated through the poetic faculty, by images from the outside world, or the realm of fancy. That is

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to say, that being able to appreciate the emotional utterance of music directly through its obvious and natural channel—the perceptive rhythmic feeling, by reason of insufficient development of that perception, they reach the emotional utterance by the indirect method of association of poetic ideas with the musical ones. As already observed, no rhythmitonal imagination, but only rhythmic perception and memory are required of the hearer of music. When these are fully developed, the whole weight of the musical utterance enters his mind through this channel to the exclusion of all other mind-action. If, however, it be insufficiently developed, the music cannot enter fully at its natural door, the mind is thus not entirely occupied, and through the natural stimulus of association poetic ideas are called up. If the composer himself indicate the course

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of the association, the indirect method, being thus emphasised, may supersede in many minds the direct method, until the latter shrink to the dimensions of a purely sensuous channel which yet appears to represent absolute music. That this is what has happened to many people is abundantly evident in the writings of to-day, to whose authors the relations of absolute and poetic music have assumed precisely these proportions. For these persons Wagner's theory contains a truth, since it meets the facts of their own case, and it is probably impossible for them to conceive of the existence of the musical imagination as an independent force in the creation of the music they have themselves reached through poetry. Their numerical superiority accounts for the extraordinary popularity of music-drama and also of the symphonic poem.

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There is no doubt that the association of music and poetry as exemplified in opera, oratorio, and in song generally meets a distinct need, and there is no reason to suppose that poetic programme music may not do the same, provided its programme be truly poetic, avoiding trivial commonplace and silly banalities, and that the music suggest ideas and is not a bare imitation of external sounds or movements. The same remark applies of course to vocal music, but owing to its somewhat equivocal form, programme music seems especially beset by this two-fold danger. Its form is perhaps still open to criticism, but provided it does not claim the rights of absolute music—that is, so long as its literary half is regarded as essential to the imaginative conception in the hearer and composer alike, and especially if that literary half is a thing

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artistic in itself—the form is a logical possibility, and the difficulty of its appeal is a purely practical one which further experience may overcome.

The case against programme music rests not in its nature, but in the position which it claims to occupy as the sole possessor and dispenser of the emotions of instrumental music. This claim, if allowed, entirely disposes of absolute music as an affair of any vital importance in the future. Of what consequence to the race is a sound-pattern, when it is looking for an utterance? That the public should in the present condition of things acquiesce in this claim is not surprising, since the majority does not possess the absolute musical imagination which in itself gives the lie to the statement, but that the bulk of composers should exhibit the same deficiency,

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creates a very serious situation for the future of music. Whatever charming and beautiful results may be achieved by the relative musical imagination, that which works under the bidding of poetic or pictorial ideas, its product must always remain, from the point of view of original creation, a thing upon a lower plane than absolute music, and this applies to modern vocal music as well as to programme music. The only possible exception occurs when the poetic ideas are themselves an original creation, as in the work of Wagner. In that case the music also rises to the creative level, and can only be distinguished from absolute music by the partial subordination of its form to the necessities of poetry and dramatic action. A symphonic poem based upon an original poetic conception worthily expressed in the programme

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might also rise to the highest creative level in its music. But at present no such work exists, and the sole ambition of the programme composer is to render into music the account of some one else's poetry, if he can resist the temptation of dispensing with poetry altogether and substituting prosaic personal experiences.

The relative imagination belongs to a type of mind standing half-way between the creative and the re-creative ; it re-creates, but with a difference and in another art-form. This is commonly mistaken for creation, but it is not so. The poetic translator also re-creates (or should do so) with a difference in the same art-form of language. The fact of another art-form being employed does not constitute creation of a single idea ; in this case the ideas are produced not by creative power, but by sensitiveness

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to suggestion. This type of mind has always been with us, and we could ill dispense with it, but if it become the type of the artist, then the future of its art is doomed. Such an art ceases to have utterance of its own and merely responds to the utterance of another art. This is the danger that is threatening to overwhelm the future of the art of music.

## CHAPTER VII

### EMOTION AND FORM

IT has been well said, "Imaginative form has value only when it images a truth."<sup>1</sup>

It is pertinent to inquire, what kind of truth? Clearly not the truth of external fact, which is the truth of intellect. We do not go to music or poetry to learn science. There is an inner truth of the soul, which by no means contradicts external truth, since it is entirely apart from it, and yet has an independent existence in no wise relying upon the intellect. This is the truth of feeling, which finds voice in imaginative art. The supreme test of

<sup>1</sup> Raymond, "Rhythm and Harmony," p. 18.

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the value of art, then, is its sincerity. The artist must above all things be sincere. The underlying truth of emotion informs and directs his imagination, so long as he remains true to himself. But if he simulate feeling which is not his own and desire to appear something other than he is, if he come to regard his art-form as an end in itself instead of a means of utterance, then the inner voice dies down into silence and his art ceases to live. It has lost its function and can no longer image truth. It cumbars the ground. Art is in this sense the mirror of nature, not of nature as it appears in the external world, but the mirror of human nature, of that mysterious blend of emotions which constitutes a differing personality in each man, though the emotions themselves are common to all. But these emotions

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cannot form art. Every great imaginative art has to pass through the slow stages of the growth of its material, and of the formative action of the imagination upon that material; sensuous collective feeling must have its day before the stage of profounder personal utterance can begin. These three stages all overlap and blend with one another, so that no distinct line can be drawn between them. At the same time it shows that there is a childhood stage of art both in the race and in the individual, in which the accumulation of material and the imaginative working of that material entirely absorb the energies of the growing mind. The art is imaginative, but as yet reveals nothing distinctive of a personality; its emotions are of the vaguest and lightest; its form is too new a thing to be otherwise than

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rejoiced in with the sheer joy of existence. Such art cannot fail to charm, being the natural and sincere utterance of an undeveloped personality. It is equally foolish to complain of it for its lack of depth, or to hold it up as an example of perfection as a full-grown art, both of which mistakes have been made at times, and particularly with the art of music. For certain composers, having reached this stage, never advance beyond it, and thus the promise of their early years remains unredeemed. Their personality ceases to grow ; they remain children in feeling and experience, and so, having nothing new to say, their art consists in continually repeating the same thing in slightly differing formulas. Contrast with this the genius of un-arrested mental growth. Here the childhood stage of composition is only of

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interest as proving how much or how little of the man existed in the child. Here the personality, seizing hold of the rhythmic art-form, gradually transforms it into its own image, until the imagination is wholly inspired and ceases to be influenced by any outward form whatever, or even by any kind of immediate external suggestion. But this can only take place in its entirety in the great personalities.

The study of the emotional element in music possesses exceptional interest from the fact that that element has actually assisted to develop a considerable part of musical technique, and therefore is clearly demonstrable in the form of the art. While the creative action of the imagination in the formation of the Idea belongs to relative Free Form—that is, form directly relat-

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ing to the standards of Strict Form, it being impossible to conceive of a definite musical Idea without such relation—the action of the emotions upon the imagination has created the movement of absolute Free Form. In actual effect these two forms are never separated ; they constantly mingle, but for purposes of analysis it is desirable to regard their united utterance as two distinct forms, in order to show wherein one differs from the other.

There is peculiar to absolute Free Form a gradual wavelike movement. It is not the rhythm that ticks, but the rhythm that surges. It is the counterpart of the rhythmic rise and fall of feeling. The natural conditions of feeling are those of a state of flux, elation and depression, animation and repose, increase or decrease of intensity. The power of music over the emotional

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nature lies in the fact that the art, by means of its undulating rhythm, is able to adapt itself to the natural succession of the emotions of the mind, and is therefore felt to be the direct appeal of the emotional nature. This adaptation takes place most obviously in the three forms which may be named "position," "tempo," and force-outline, the absolute movements of Pitch, Duration, and Intensity. The complete wave-movement, when these three forms are united, consists of a rise and fall of pitch, of a quickening and slackening of duration, and of an increase and decrease of intensity.

It will be seen that we have here the material for that most important of modern musical effects, Climax. The effects of climax and of antithesis are necessary to all the arts, and are founded

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upon the physiological law that exercised faculties are ever tending to resume a state of rest.<sup>1</sup> Stated shortly, the facts are as follows: the mind is unable to appreciate a less powerful impression after a more powerful one, because that particular faculty of appreciation is for the moment exhausted. Hence the futility of anti-climax, and the necessity for the more powerful impression to follow the less powerful, so that the mind may appreciate both. For the same reason, antithesis, *i.e.* contrast, is essential to prolonged appreciation, and antithesis in music, though frequently the contrast of Ideas belonging to relative form, is also present in absolute form. There is the contrast presented by the rise to the highest point and the descent to the

<sup>1</sup> See Spencer's "Essay on Philosophy of Style."

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lowest, the contrast of direction of movement, and also the contrast of position between high and low. This applies to all the three forms mentioned, and as they may be very variously combined, it is evident that the contrasts possible to music afford quite as wide a field as the climaxes. Indeed, climax itself is perhaps the greatest effect of contrast that can be imagined. The statement of this physiological necessity is only another way of putting what has already been said, that the natural conditions of feeling are those of flux, and that the possibility of utterance of that feeling in a continuous art-form depends upon the flexibility of the form. Music composed in a fixed position, tempo, and force-outline, will depend for emotional utterance entirely upon the freedom of the Idea, assisted by colour-outline, and

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if that be also missing, there can be no emotional utterance whatever.

The form of Position, by nature an ever-shifting movement, has been transformed by art into a succession of fixed steps. These are accepted by the ear in place of the natural movement, and thus an emotional significance attaches not only to the rise and fall of the chromatic scale, but also to that of the diatonic scales and the larger intervals. With the latter, it is simply the general principle of rise and fall that is in question, the relation of intervals being a matter of relative pitch. Besides this general principle, position has the complications arising from the synchronous possibilities of pitch. Tone-movement cannot be fast and slow, or loud and soft at the same time, but owing to octave repetition, it can easily

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be high and low simultaneously. With the orchestra any position can be combined with any other, or a chord can be made to extend over the whole scale at once. The fixing of position within a small compass is a comparatively exceptional occurrence in modern music, its normal condition being that of perpetual movement. Such cannot be said of tempo, for here we find the conditions exactly reversed. Tempo is usually fixed, its movement (accel. and ritard.) being regarded as the exception. How far this may be due to incomplete development of technique, or how much of it is owing to underlying emotional conditions, it is impossible in the present state of the art to hazard an opinion. A fixed tempo has not the physical monotony of a fixed position in anything approaching the same degree, yet

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when once attention is drawn to it, its monotony can be felt. This is especially noticeable when the fixity becomes absolute rigidity, as in the case of mechanically produced music. Where the human element enters this can rarely happen, and our tempo seems to ebb and flow of itself to the emotional tide, so that its fixity becomes rather nominal than absolute. At the same time a certain standard does for the most part prevail, and this standard seems to have brought about the alternation of fast and slow movements in the cyclic forms. The effect of contrast in tempo was needed, but the enclosing of the contrast required within one unbroken form by means of gradual transition was quite beyond the technique of the composer. He was obliged to break off the rapid movement abruptly,

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and start the slower one as abruptly. This reminds one a little of the unrelated "loud" and "soft" voluntaries of the old-fashioned organist. The old-fashioned organ did not lend itself kindly to crescendo or diminuendo effects, therefore a movement containing the extremes of forte and piano possible to the instrument was obviously inartistic from the sudden nature of the contrasts in intensity, which the player either could not or would not prevent. How far the analogy may hold good with tempo time will show, but it is probable that the absence of gradation, except as an occasional effect, may still be due to the inherent difficulties of performance of a constantly moving tempo, and that the possibilities thus opened up have not yet struck the composer's imagination. A fixed tempo as a standard savours

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rather too much of Strict Form to belong naturally to Free Form. With regard to both tempo and force-outline, it is remarkable how recent is the full development of the wave-form, and yet that Beethoven's use of it was far ahead of his own times, and possibly with regard to tempo, of our time also. Beethoven is said to have invented the crescendo, at any rate as a normal means of effect, and though in his scores the tempo wave-form is but exceptionally indicated, Schindler tells us that in his own piano-playing and in the superintendence of performances of his own chamber music, the composer used an almost continual *tempo rubato*. That the same principle was not carried out in his symphonies was because he had no orchestra under his own personal direction. In Schindler's opinion, had

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Beethoven retained his hearing and been given the necessary scope, he would have founded an entirely new era of music upon the freedom of tempo. It was a development that only began to appear in his playing at the beginning of his third period. But tempo had not then attained the recognised position even of a normal speed variation in orchestral music, for it is only the evolution of the conductor that has rendered the present amount of variation feasible.

Nothing, however, is more striking than the rapid growth of force-outline during the last century and the consequent gain to the art in emotional utterance. It is here again very evident that the means and the method of employing those means must both be mastered, before the end can be accomplished. It is not the nature of

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man that has altered nor the nature of music, in order to produce this extraordinary transformation, but simply that the technique of the art has advanced far enough for emotional force to find its outlet through musical forms, which had formerly through a too great rigidity barred its way. Though the climax of mere sound can easily be abused as a means of effect, it is indisputable that force-outline is the most important in general effect of all the absolute forms. The movements of position and tempo are almost meaningless without it, the quality of an instrument is frequently dependent on its force-variation, and though the converse is also true and force-outline requires the other outlines in like manner to complete its effect, still in the general combination it is force-outline that produces the

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greatest amount of variety and the most overpowering emotional results upon a large scale. We have only to call in mind the toylike effect of the feeble twang and tinkle, the occasional sweetness but utter powerlessness of that which our forefathers called a band some three hundred years ago, to realise how impossible it is for any great emotional utterance to take place in music without adequate resonance and graduation of tone. And for this, which the modern orchestra gives us, instrumental music has waited long.

It is evident that the complete development of free outlines must play havoc with those forms which, having grown up in an earlier stage of the art, ignored its possibilities. Fugue form neglected antithesis, but was capable of a massive if formal climax. Sonata

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form included a formal use of anti-thesis, since this effect in the development of ideas was to some extent understood, but it made no provision for climax. The more interesting class of movement was placed at the beginning of the symphony or sonata and the form commonly tailed off to comparative frivolity at the end. Before Beethoven, no symphony composer had ever thought of introducing the greatest climax last. It was not in the original conception of the form, and but for Beethoven and Schubert would never have come there. Beethoven's relation to the music of his time may be summed up by saying that he re-modelled the symphony to the requirements of Free Form as he perceived them. The compromise perfectly answered his purpose, for the time had not then come for

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Free Form to claim the whole of its own. These conditions are now long past, and the compromise is no longer possible. Had not Wagner's natural bias led him to the theatre, who knows with what wonderful new forms he might have enriched symphonic art ! Truly, in his case, the gain of opera has been the loss of instrumental music.

Thus it is that we stand at the parting of the ways, with a past that can aid us little, in a present that can aid us less, looking to a future that presents an impenetrable blank to the intellect. But it is exactly this condition of intellectual darkness that offers the imagination its opportunity. Whatever may be the absolute music of the future, it will be based not upon intellectual design, but upon imaginative form that will image truth.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EMOTION AND IDEA

THE general principle of undulating rhythm in music seems to suggest the great impersonal forces of nature rather than an individual utterance.

A high position indicates to our feelings the region of the ethereal, a low position that of the gigantic and awe-inspiring ; a rapid tempo is animating, a slow tempo suggests solemnity or repose ; between force and light the association is obvious, since a nocturne is never anything but piano or pianissimo ; subdued feelings require lesser, exalted feelings a greater degree of force. Any attempt to reverse these conditions in vocal music

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causes an effect of absurdity through the contrast between the effect produced by the words and that produced by the music. In absolute music no reversal of the normal conditions is possible. Each of necessity produces its own effect, which is obvious and unalterable. And the emotions thus aroused are vague and collective, common to the race, and easy of utterance to any composer. Equally vague are the emotions evoked by the general harmonic forms. The Strict Forms make for repose, Free Forms for unrest, a preponderance of harsh discords produces a feeling of distress more or less acute. We also associate the minor standard with grief, the major with rejoicing, but it is evident that these forms depend for their emotional effect largely upon tempo, and upon the general proportion

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of Strict and Free, as it is possible to reverse the conditions and to make a minor movement quite cheerful, and a major one overpoweringly depressing. This is because both are Strict Forms, the only difference being that the minor standard is the weaker and less consonant of the two, and therefore is more easily associated with depression of feeling. On the side of duration, an Equal outline is restful especially if combined with scale-form, an Unequal outline is more animated, and a Free<sup>1</sup> outline is restless and agitating. It will be seen that the general principle of emotional utterance in music depends, in the Strict and Free Forms, on their relative proportions, and in the absolute forms on the contrasts provided by their general scale of outline, which correspond to con-

<sup>1</sup> Free of the time-beat standard.

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trasting emotional states, and also on the wave-movement associated with emotional rise and fall.

In the case of the absolute form of colour-outline which has yet to be considered, the general principle does not seem to apply. The material of colour-outline consists of an agglomeration of units, a collection rather than a scale, whose general relations do not admit of any one method of arrangement being preferred above another, and therefore not a scale at all as it exists in the other free outlines. For this reason colour has no wave-form of its own. Its participation in the general principle is limited to assisting or modifying the other Free outlines. It has here no independent utterance. Some will look for the *raison d'être* of colour in its sensuous beauty. It is true that this is incomparable, and

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far transcends any other form of decorative musical value. To hear a single chord or even a single tone of exquisite quality is a delight in itself. Nor is Art here any whit behind Nature. If to many the voice stands highest in the colour scale, there are others to whom orchestral colour in its component parts is even more beautiful. Without entering into any discussion of their respective relative values, it may be pointed out that a perfect voice is a much rarer thing than a perfect instrument, that the rarity of a perfect vocal method is still greater, and that from the point of view of Quality, the average solo-singer stands below the first-class orchestral player. Further that no combination of the most perfect voices imaginable can provide a tithe of the colour contrasts and combinations of the orchestra.

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But if the sensuous beauty of colour be its most obvious attribute, it does not follow that this was the determining factor in its evolution. Though it is difficult for us to judge of what decided the preference of the primitive savage for one kind of tone rather than another, there seems no doubt that noise pleased him far more than abstract beauty. We can readily perceive the same phenomenon in the children of to-day. That is to say that the utterance of collective rhythmic feeling is the essential thing, and the artistic value of the shape taken by that utterance is the inessential. There is no reason for supposing that these are not the fundamental conditions of musical evolution. For the art to be perfect it must have decorative beauty, but that does not involve any essential change in the relations of utterance and form. The

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need for a form of utterance comes first ; the need for beauty of that form comes second. Why then should the conditions have been reversed in the development of colour-outline ? And when the art reached the stage of individual utterance, when force had to make way for colour, is it unreasonable to suppose that man made instruments in his own image rather than in the image of abstract beauty ? If mere beauty was all he wanted, his own voice might well have satisfied him, and instruments need never have advanced beyond their primitive function of defining the tone-path of the voice. But just because the voice, considered as mere tone, is insufficient for the utterance of all the varied characteristics of individual emotion in music, so, by the slow and gradual path of experience and by the

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promptings of emotional intuition were instruments called into existence.

The function of colour-outline, then, is not merely to make music beautiful ; it is to render possible the utterance of the individual in music by means of the natural association of voice and feeling. Each instrument represents a certain quality of tone, emphasised by its dissociation with other qualities and further development upon its own lines, but its capacity for emotional utterance lies in the fact that emotional utterance originated in the voice, and was thence transferred to instrumental tone. It is probable that the speaking, as well as the singing voice, has been a factor in the evolution of instruments. It thus appears that the voice is the early homogeneous stage, the natural standard, out of which orchestral complexity has developed, as emotional

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complexity grew and required specialised types of utterance in place of the one general type. If it be objected to this, that the voice is more expressive than any instrument, the reason for this greater expressiveness, if it exist, lies in a wider range of expression. In addition to expressiveness of tone, the voice has the expression of words, and that indefinable effect which is due to its physical relation with personality. From the point of view of the expressiveness of colour only, the instrument has the advantage. To realise this, one has but to think of what the effect would be of any great orchestral work rendered, if such were possible, by vocal tone only. A piano transcription would be infinitely preferable.

Whereas in position, tempo, and force - outline, instrumental utterance differs only from vocal utterance in the

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extension of their respective scales above and below the limits of vocal utterance, in colour-outline the evolution has been so pronounced as to appear already a difference of form. Instrumental types are so far removed from the parent voice-stock that vocal utterance in colour is one thing, instrumental utterance is quite another. And as colour-outline becomes more and more developed, it is probable that the anachronism involved in the combination of voice and orchestra will become increasingly perceptible, so that vocal art will go one way admitting instruments merely as a background, while the development of instrumental art will eventually exclude voices altogether. Emotional utterance in colour-outline will have become so well defined, that the vague vocal tone will be meaningless by the side of instrumental tone. But

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this will not be achieved by the multiplication of instruments. The most direct and characteristic utterance of emotion in music is that which is associated with the Idea. It is solely in its association with the Idea that colour-outline can form the instrument of definite and personal emotional utterance as distinguished from the indefinite impersonal utterance of absolute form in general. The Idea when fully developed clothes itself in the precise form of colour-outline that belongs to it, and thus gains a quality of personal utterance in a degree not otherwise obtainable. The evolution of emotional utterance in music is from the indefinite to the definite, of which the form-development from Strict to Free is the outward sign. The characterisation of the Idea in colour is suggested by Haydn and Mozart, forms a strong

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factor in the symphonies of Beethoven and Schubert, and makes immense strides of advance in the works of Berlioz and Wagner. At this point the association with the poetic idea has confused the issue, and what is actually inherent in the nature of music itself has been ascribed to its association with poetry. But seeing that music is surely advancing upon her own natural and inevitable path of development, it is impossible that the association of another art can be the essential cause of this evolution. Vocal music owes much to poetry, and naturally, if any one should wish to tell a story or to associate any particular personage or event with a musical utterance, the literary art must be called in to do its own work. Beyond its special form of Idea, the rhythmitonal form, music has no utterance of ideas, but only of emo-

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tions. But that an art whose supreme greatness lies in its essential humanity, in its actual embodiment of human feelings with a faithfulness and precision impossible to any other art, should be described as dependent upon the medium of words for the defining of its emotions or even for the utterance of any emotion at all, will surely appear to future generations as a temporary aberration of intellect on the part of their forefathers. Appreciation of the true character of musical utterance is shown in Mendelssohn's remark that what had to be said in music was not too indefinite to go into words, but rather, too definite. For the utterance of emotion nothing can well be more vague and misleading than language. Every one knows that it is not the word but the tone that gives the clue

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to the feeling. In the same way, the tone, the colour-outline of music, and especially of the orchestra, identifies the emotion.

As the dramatist through intuition and experience of human character resolves his own personality into the separate units of his dramatic personalities, so the composer through intuition and experience of the character and scope of orchestral instruments resolves his personality into the multisonant personality of the orchestra, speaks with a different voice in each instrument, and, unlike the dramatist, is able to create new characters by the blending of instruments, and to unite their varied utterances into one massive whole. But this is the ideal composer. Many there are who force their own utterance upon the orchestra ; it is only the few who give the orchestra

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leave to be itself. The majority of composers ignore its human element, and regard it as a mere collection of instruments corresponding to a score, forgetful of the mind behind each instrument. If an orchestral player become a machine, it is the composer who makes him so, through neglect of the individuality of his instrument, which is to the true artist a second self.

There remains to be noticed only the general aspect of the relation of the Idea to emotion. This is the relation of a picture to nature, and not of a photograph. Music idealises all emotion ; it selects intuitively the essential, freeing it from the accidents of the inessential. But, like all art, it has its limits. Many writers have observed its inability to embody the mean, the contemptible, the sordid. The reverse of the noble in

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music is merely the insignificant. Only that which is great can be emphasised. Hence the greatness of the art depends upon greatness of character, and an insignificant or contemptible personality will sooner or later render all artistic facility abortive. Greatness of mind reveals itself in the form of the Idea, in the proportion in which Free Form enters into it, and in the breadth of the rise or fall of position to be found in it. Tempo and force-outline in a lesser degree may have their effect, but an Idea that has no breadth of absolute pitch-outline, that runs uncertainly to and fro, cannot be other than insignificant. The most complete and perfect form of Idea seems to be that which consists of a single broad rise and fall, like some of the motives of "Parsifal."

In all the varied utterance of music

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there is none that, besides its direct appeal to the emotions, is not writ large in the rhythmic form of the art, for the understanding of all who can read the signs of its presence.

## CHAPTER IX

### INTELLECT AND INTUITION

It is a fact that, with one notable exception, all the writers upon the origin of music have striven to account for it without so much as a passing reference to Rhythm as a factor of importance in its evolution. Had musicians possessed any scientific knowledge of the structure of their art, the amateurishness of Spencer's theory of its origin must have been at once apparent ; indeed, such a theory could never have been advanced. It is obvious that the essential basis of music in the Standards of Strict Form is a thing peculiar to music itself, and that no such basis, or even the most

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rudimentary signs of it, are to be found in language. The essential basis of language, that which renders it intelligible, is logical coherence of thought expressed in grammatical forms. Nothing could well be more dissimilar in origin and in method to that which renders tone-relations perceptible—viz., the standards of duration and pitch. The method of language is a reasoned method, that of music is intuitive.

While most of the writers on the subject admit the existence of a “musical faculty,” “*une pensée musicale*,” they ignore the discovery made by Dr. Wallaschek during his ethnological studies of the origin of music in rhythmic pulsation. As long ago as 1893 he stated his belief in the existence of what he termed the “rhythmical impulse,” or the “time-sense,” in man, in which the origin of

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music must be sought. He perceived it as an independent force leading to the formation of tone-order. This statement appears to have fallen upon unheeding ears, and therefore it is only just to recall it to mind.

Apart from the question of the origin of music, Spencer's famous essay has a value of its own. It records the independent observation of a thinker who had perceived a truth which was hidden from the more technically proficient in music. The statement that "variations of voice are the physiological results of variations of feelings" is in itself without any reference to language, a statement of the origin of absolute Free Form in music. The analysis of the variations of voice into "loudness, quality, pitch, intervals, and rate of variation" is an entirely accurate analysis of that

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form. It is evident that "loudness" is force-outline, that "quality" is colour-outline, that "pitch" and "intervals" constitute position, and that "rate of variation" is tempo. That all these variations proceeded originally from "voice" is corroborated by Dr. Wallaschek, who says that the primitive use of instruments was confined to furnishing "the necessary hold and the equally necessary definiteness for the melodic frame-work."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, though instruments played the important part of furnishing the material of Strict and relative Free Form, the material of absolute form was supplied originally by the voice in precisely the same manner and for the same reason that it supplies the tone-inflections of language, namely, in the natural utterance of emotion.

<sup>1</sup> "Primitive Music," p. 30.

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Spencer himself reached what he took to be the essential foundation of music through language, and mistaking a part for the whole he exalted his personal experience into a theory of origin, oblivious of the existence of the other even more essential half of the musical foundation. This is not surprising, since musicians themselves were equally oblivious, intellectually. No stronger proof could exist of the purely intuitive origin and function of the Standards of Strict Form than the fact that, during the whole course of this controversy extending intermittently over fifty years, it never once occurred to the intellects of those who had known these standards intuitively from childhood, that they were actually overlooking the natural and complete refutation of the theory they desired to disprove. Having had no hand in the

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making of rhythm, the intellect knew it not, and intellectually it was not recognised beyond its obvious form of time-outline. The musical intellect was so engrossed in the vain attempt to make music on its own account, that it completely neglected its true function of examination and scientific explanation of the intuitive method. This intuitive method of music, the rhythmic form-image, existing only in the brain of a musician, has remained until now a sealed book to men of science. Nevertheless, that Spencer apprehended the existence of such a method in literature is proved by the following extract from his essay on "The Philosophy of Style" :—

"The species of composition which the law we have traced out indicates as the perfect one, is the one which genius tends naturally to produce. As we found

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that the kinds of sentence which are theoretically best, are those commonly employed by superior minds, and by inferior minds when temporarily exalted ; so, we shall find that the ideal form for a poem, essay, or fiction, is that which the ideal writer would evolve spontaneously. One in whom the powers of expression fully responded to the state of feeling, would unconsciously use that variety in the mode of presenting his thoughts, which Art demands. . . . His mode of expression naturally responding to his thought and emotion, there will flow from his pen a composition changing as the aspects of his subject change. He will thus without effort conform to what we have seen to be the laws of effect. And while his work presents to the reader that variety needful to prevent continuous exertion of the same faculties,

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it will also answer to the description of all highly-organised products both of man and nature. It will be, not a series of like parts simply placed in juxtaposition, but one whole made up of unlike parts that are mutually dependent."

In the midst of an intellect-ridden generation, one who proclaims aloud not merely the existence but the domination of the intuitive imagination in art, is likely to find himself a voice crying in the wilderness. In spite of all evidence we are so wedded to our conscious design, so determined that nothing of any consequence can be done without it, that an artist who takes no thought for the morrow, and allows his ideas to arise and unfold themselves as do the lilies of the field, must needs appear a fool, if nothing worse. Only the few will believe that mere cleverness, the craft of the intellect,

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has no place in creative art, and when it is found there is simply the fungus on the tree-trunk which shows that the life is out. Yet the truth cries out to be heard. So long as sufficient energy of rhythmic feeling exists to fully carry out the intuitive method, there is no room for any other method. Moreover, reason is the complete contradiction of the intuitive method in action. The two cannot coexist. On this point science speaks with no uncertain voice. "Many cases of aphasia prove that an expression cannot be emotional and intellectual at the same time, the one kind of expression arising in and spreading through different parts of the brain and nervous system from those occupied by the other" (Dr. Wallaschek, "Primitive Music," p. 253).

In the minds of the greatest composers the intuitive action of the emotions in

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composition was so continuous as to actually prevent the intellectual development on other lines of which the mind was potentially capable. Hence the absence of general intellectual power in such a brain, a circumstance which has often been remarked. When the musical genius turns to literature as a means of expression in addition to music, then some of his intellectual potentialities begin to be realised, since literary and poetic expression cannot take place without some intellectual development. Of this comparatively new type, Wagner is the greatest example. And it is noteworthy that Wagner himself has written of a Beethoven symphony, "This symphony . . . in all its changefulness reveals an ordering principle so free and bold that we can deem it more forcible than any logic, yet without the laws of logic

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entering into it in the slightest ; nay, rather, the reasoning march of thoughts with its track of causes and effects here finds no sort of foothold. So that this symphony must positively appear to us a revelation from another world."

Even so the intuitive action of the emotions always has appeared and always will appear to the intellect, which can only reason. Yet at the same time it can apprehend that this "ordering principle" in which the "reasoning march of thoughts finds no sort of foothold" is the great principle of Rhythmic Unity, which out of the most insignificant beginnings has developed this marvellously complex art of music, with its equally marvellous simplicity of utterance. It is not perhaps generally known that Beethoven is reported to have said, "*That* mind alone whose every thought is rhythm can

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embody music, can comprehend its mysteries, its divine revelations.”<sup>1</sup> It is not a statement likely to have been invented by his contemporaries, and it shows not only that Beethoven’s every thought was rhythm, that reasoned thought in music was unknown to him, but that he was himself aware of it and knew that it could not be otherwise.

Enough and perhaps more than enough has been said to make clear the conditions of rhythmical form to the intellect, and to impress upon the mind the necessity of letting the imaginative function alone to work out its own salvation. At the same time the relations of intuition and intellect require to be stated.

True intellectual development in music is the correlative of intuitive development,

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Madame Bettine von Arnim to Goethe.

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and exists for the sake of perfecting the intuitive product. The office of the intellect is to apprehend, and criticise if need be, the intuitive art-work. There never was yet a genius so great that his intuition was invariably infallible. Schubert was unable to criticise his own music, and hence both its greatness and its inequality. It is characteristic of the intuitive method that it is rarely able to correct. It is purely synthetic and not reflective. It states once for all. But since it may err in details, only the intellect can perceive exactly what is wrong with its work, and out of reasoned knowledge suggest the method of putting it right. The all-importance of this critical function cannot but be recognised, and in this lies the need for a thorough and practical scheme of intellectual education in music, a need

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which can only be fully supplied by a detailed analysis. At the same time the synthetic function must not be overlooked. All the sound-phenomena of music must become familiar to the mind *as sound*, else the analysis of them will mean nothing. The development of the intuitive function consists in its exercise. It can be developed, firstly, by rhythmic physical exercise, including dancing, accompanied by simple rhythmic music; secondly, by rhythmic musical exercise, such as the singing of folk-songs and dance-tunes, and at a later stage by the playing of instruments especially in orchestral and concerted music. The value of intuition in musical performance is only second to its importance in composition. It is, unfortunately, easily destroyed by means of mechanical repetition and wrong practice induced by wrong

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theory. Its place is largely taken amongst those who are trained for music by a lifeless superficial facility, the result of perpetual mechanical repetition, which from the artistic standpoint is absolutely barren. It means the substitution of technique for utterance. The problem of an executant's education is to acquire technique and develop intuition at the same time. The greater the natural intuitive power, the more rapidly will technique be mastered. It may be assisted by the frequent hearing of good Rhythmitonal music well performed, by singing and playing from memory, and especially by pauses of rest in the study of technique. It is evident that this most important synthetic part of rhythmic instruction cannot be taught from any book, and must precede instruction in the intellectual analysis of rhythm. In-

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calculable harm has been done to music by the attempt to reverse the natural process, in putting intellectual instruction first, leaving the intuitive power to take care of itself. The result is that natural rhythmic feeling is weakened if not wholly suppressed, and where it should lead it can only follow. Further, if intuitive development have not first taken place, intellectual development is deprived of its function and degenerates into triviality and pedantry. Hence the cause of all the trivial and pedantic music that has been written and performed ever since music came to be taught in the schools instead of growing up in the life of the people.

There is one point in composition where the intuitive and intellectual functions meet, and, but for the assistance of the intellect at this given point,

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no permanent art of music could exist. This consists in the written record. The invention of notation, though it must conform to the requirements of intuitive action, is of purely intellectual origin. No intuitive action would ever of itself lead to the invention of written signs. Hence the inability of folk-music to record itself, and its lack of advance beyond the small form of a melody which could easily be remembered. The debt owed by music to the monks of the Middle Ages is in this respect incalculable. If counterpoint kept back rhythmic development, the latter would never have taken place at all without a system of record. And if, as is probable, notation at first dictated tone-movement, there is no question now but that tone-movement dictates notation. The act of notation

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is an act of the intellect, that is, an act of analysis. The stream of imaginative sound which forms one whole in the mind must be resolved into its component parts. Outlines must be detached, chords must be analysed. Especially is this the case with an orchestral score. The difficulty of musical composition lies less in the mental composition than in forming an accurate record, in making the sign exactly fit the sound. The perversity of our present musical education, or rather its transmission intact from the Middle Ages, is shown in the fact that too often it teaches the sign regardless of the sound, and encourages students to work harmony exercises after the manner in which they would think out problems in chess. Of late years there has been a movement in favour of what is called ear-training, the re-

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cognition of the name of the note by its sound, and "ear-tests" are now beginning to enter into the practical side of examinations. But unfortunately this has as yet brought little modification into the "theoretical" scheme, the written part of examinations. It is evident that what is wanted is a change of method, and the introduction of a graduated system for teaching notation, which should be the writing of music from the given sound, beginning with simple melodies and chord-movement, through concerted music up to the orchestral score. All children and beginners should be taught elementary notation in this manner, as it will greatly assist the power of reading from sight upon an instrument, and its importance for students of composition need scarcely be pointed out. Between  
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the ages of seven and fourteen is the most impressionable period of the human ear, and difficulties can then be easily mastered, which years of practice in later life will hardly effect.

The objection that mere writing of music from dictation will never teach a student how to develop his own ideas falls to the ground when it is perceived that the faculty of form-imaging is precisely what cannot be taught, but only encouraged to grow. No training of any kind was ever required for the composing of folk-melodies, many of which show a perfect development of an idea in miniature form. But it must be remembered that the ways of natural development are not the ways of forced development. It is the forcing of a student to write in a form larger than his rhythmic feeling can image that

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makes him resort to the assistance of the intellect. Yet it is surely better to be original in a small form than commonplace in a large one. The day will perhaps at last arrive for music that has already arrived for literature, when each writer will naturally discover the kind and the size of the form best suited to him, and will not be expected to conform to a few fixed types ; when instead of inquiring what the form is, people will ask what the utterance is, and whether it is realised by the form. In that day the form will be judged as a means of utterance, and not as an end in itself. But this change must come from within, and not from without. If we want true imaginative form in music we must encourage the action of intuition and discourage the action of intellect in actual com-

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position except in its office of recorder and critic.

The man of genius is not merely one who possesses imagination, but he who allows his imagination to possess him. This is a mental state unknown to talent, which identifies itself with reasoned action. Hence the distinction which is perceived to exist between genius and talent. Imagination is not denied to talent, but here it becomes the servant instead of the master. Make it the master, give it the natural freedom of intuitive action, and you at once transform talent into genius. There is no reason in the nature of things that the difference between a small imagination and a great one should be more than a difference in degree. The small imagination will naturally produce the small work, the great imagination the

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greater work, and each has its value as an utterance of personality. There is room in music for imaginative form of any size from the folk-song upwards, and the small works have a charm that is all their own. But that so few exist of any real value is because of the craze for imitation of the great works, so that the small imagination falls a prey to the domination of the intellect, which offers an easy, ready-made way of doing the thing on a big scale. At once personal utterance vanishes and genius shrinks into talent. The natural difference in degree has become a difference in kind as regards the artistic product. The life is gone, and is replaced by imitation of life. Instead of a real flower, one is offered an artificial one.

The cause of all this is apparent. It is a lack of the faith that moves

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mountains. No true imaginative work, great or small, was ever produced without it, for faith is actually reliance upon intuitive action, instead of upon reasoned action. It is the tacit admission of the intellect that there are more things in heaven and earth than have yet been dreamed of in its philosophy. When intellect ceases to ignore these things, and falls behind to study and prove them as natural phenomena, then is scientific truth added to imaginative truth, and faith is justified, not merely by its own works, but also by the conclusions of the intellect.

Thus it becomes evident that there exists a form of mind action, which we have named intuition, working upon a plane absolutely unknown to the intellect, which can only judge of its results; that this form of mental action,

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other than intellectual, is the formative principle of unity, that as Rhythm in music, has called the art of music into existence ; that hitherto it has been recognised only in its most developed form, and so named genius, but now appears as the author equally of the lowest and the highest forms of living art. And to the further developments of intuitive action in the future, who shall set a limit ?

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